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The videogame magazine

February 1999
Issue 3 £2.70

Argade

DRIVE TIME

REVIEWED!

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BURNS RUBBER
ON PLAYSTATION**

(IT LEAVES GRAN TURISMO STANDING!)



**NEW TO
VIDEOGAMES?**

Got a PlayStation?
New to N64?
Get stuck in
on page 47

**SONIC THE
HEDGEHOG**

Gasp at the beauty
of his new game

**"I JUST TOOK
A BULLET IN
THE LUNCHBOX"**

Videogaming's 50 most
painful moments

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- Win every round in Tekken 3
- Be "god" in Sin
- Live forever in Banjo Kazooie
- Milk cows in Zelda 64

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"LARA, IT'S OVER"

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SHEARER

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videogame
golf at night"



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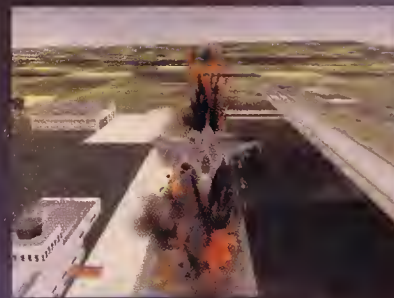
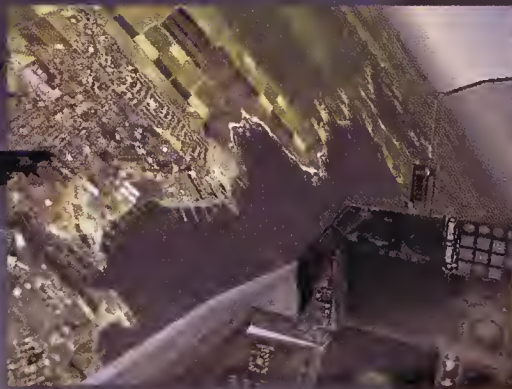


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CD-ROM

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Feb 1999

Issue three

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Arcade

The videogame magazine

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EDITORIAL

In with the new...



With Neil West, Editor

Hello. Thanks for picking up this issue of *Arcade*. That's my ugly mug in the photo above, but I don't know what you look like. I really don't know much about you at all. Right now you might be on a train, at home, in the office, or even standing in a newsagents. You might be pegging it down the street having just nicked this copy from a newsstand. But let's hope not. You might be at a friend's house, having just spotted *Arcade* on the coffee table, and sneaking a quick leaf-through. You might be a regular *Arcade* subscriber. You might be reading a videogame magazine for the very first time. You might be a man, you might be a woman. You might have a big pile of homework to finish off. You might have just put the kids to bed.

I haven't got a clue.

But the one thing I do know is that you enjoy videogames. Whether you play only once a week with your mates after the pub or you sneak a game of *Quake* in the office most lunchtimes, you've got an interest in gaming.

And *Arcade*'s here to help you out. Whether it's by letting you know which PlayStation footy game is best (*ISS Pro '98* from Konami, by the way) or how to cheat while playing *Trespasser* on the PC (press [ctrl] + [shift] + Q + W, release W then you can skip to any level you want) we want to help you get the most out of videogames. And in return, hopefully you'll want to become a regular *Arcade* reader.

That's it. Sales pitch over. Thanks for sticking with it. Before you get on enjoying the rest of the issue, just let me say goodbye to outgoing editor and art editor Matt Bielby and Matt Williams. Thanks for all your efforts, chaps, and if you ever need to know which Nintendo 64 car racing game offers the best tyre-squealing thrills, you know where to find us. (Oh, what the hell, it's Nintendo's own *F1 World Grand Prix* and it'll cost you just £40).

Cheers,

Neil West
Neil West
Editor

Rants & Raves

Lara Croft model Nell McAndrew more attractive with her clothes on? New videogames too expensive? Dreamcast a load of old pants? Your letters say it all...

It's great to know that *Arcade* readers have so much to say for themselves. We've been deluged with letters from young and old, male and female, recent owners of spanking new PlayStation 5 and ten-year videogame veterans. By far and away the most popular topic of correspondence this month has been *Arcade* 2's pictorial of Lara Croft model Nell McAndrew. Most of you loved it – as we hoped you would. Some, however, felt the pages could have been better given to more "serious" coverage of games. Maybe this shows you can't please all of the people all the time, but we're going to keep trying.



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Conspiracy theories

I was interested in the conspiracy theories surrounding Acclaim's relationship with Nintendo, as mentioned in the *Turok 2* review (*Arcade* 1, page 140).

Here's another one.

Why is it that whenever I go into Dixons and look at the consoles, the N64s are always turned off? The same thing happens on the computer front with the PC and Mac. If there is a Mac on display, it will be either turned off, or showing the Desktop. The PC on the other hand will have some flight sim or similarly good-looking application in demo mode.

It was the same when the Saturn first appeared. If you went into a branch of Dixons back then, the PlayStation would be on, but the Saturn would be turned off. Even further back, the same thing happened with the Amiga and ST. The Amiga would be showing an animation while the ST was showing the Desktop.

What's going on?

Noel Wallace, via e-mail

What is going on? We rang up Dixons head office, asked to speak to someone "in charge" and were put through to a nice lady who asked us what we wanted. We explained Noel's letter, the lady made a very Marge Simpson-esque "Hmmm" noise, and told us she would ask around and get back to us.

Later on in the day the phone rang and a different nice lady from Dixons asked, "Is this a joke?" and we explained that it wasn't. Oh no. Indeed, far from it (and so on). Then she went "Hmmm" – a lot like the first lady – and told us that Noel's observations must be coincidence. To back this up, she explained that she'd personally visited a Dixons shop that very morning and had quite clearly seen a Nintendo 64 on display running "that Bandicoot game."

So that clears that one up then. Kind of.



■ Dixons – is there something sinister going on?

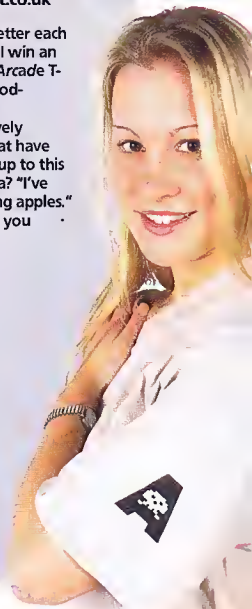
Write to us at Arcade

■ Do the write thing. Let us know what's on your mind and share your gaming wisdom with the rest of the world. Send your letters to:

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Future Publishing,
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E-mail us at: arcade.mag@futurenet.co.uk

The best letter each month will win an exclusive *Arcade* T-shirt, as modelled here by the Lovely Lisa™. What have you been up to this month Lisa? "I've been eating apples." And there you have it.



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CD-ROM

Rants & Raves

On the side

■ Congratulations. As an older gamer it's a real pleasure to read such a well put together mag – especially one that features writing from some of the best journo's in the business. I was worried that Jaz Rignall had retired or died.
Gordon Bethwaite, via e-mail

■ So, Neil West, still alive! I was a big fan of *Next Generation* magazine when I was in the States, but I thought you'd disappeared off of the face of the planet.
Simon Lamb, via e-mail

■ Just got the second issue of your magazine, and it's coming along very well. The "99 for '99" feature was great, très informative. And it was great to hear that good ol' Sir Clive was still alive.
Alexis Nelson, Birmingham

That's quite enough small letters about being glad people haven't died. Somehow it's all a bit morbid.

■ Congratulations on a superb issue. I particularly liked the "Games Night" feature. I bought two issues so I could read one and save the other for future generations to refer to when pondering what really good literature is.
Shaun Myatt, via e-mail

■ I love the clever idea of the "Games Night". Me and a few friends have begun to do a similar thing except we skip out the reviews. It usually ends up in a fight, though.
Ollie B, via e-mail

Thanks Ollie. But having a few mates round to play games? It's hardly an original idea, surely?

Woman problem

In your story on the Tokyo Games Show (*Arcade 1*, page 15) you complain about women not being "politically correct" for being at the Tokyo Games Show. What is the problem? Normally you guys complain that there are not enough women participating in videogaming. You can't have it both ways – it's about time you said "yes" to women.

Thomas Holzer Theale

Eh? No, we said that it was politically incorrect that the only women gracing the Tokyo Games Show were scantily clad "companions" designed to lure male show-goers to stands. We already say "yes" to women! Which leads us to...



■ The real life Lara: very much "in the flesh."

Get 'em off

Can I have just a quick word about the Nell McAndrew interview? Look, we really don't need another *Loaded/ForWankingMonthly* mag on the shelves, so can you stay clear of the mucky pictures? Especially when they have no relevance to the way that most gamers will know Nell, as Lara Croft.

Besides, she looks a damn sight sexier dressed as Lara than she does as her stripped-bare-as-a-Christmas-turkey-ready-for-(ahem)-roasting-Yorkshire self.

Gary Ransley-Miller, via e-mail

Okay, but not everyone thinks this way...

Keep 'em on

You guys scared me for a minute there. First a creepy-looking Sir Clive Sindair staring out at me with those come-to-bed eyes, then just about the campest shot of that *South Park* bloke I've ever seen. I was beginning to worry that *Arcade* was taking a bit of an unpleasant turn. Thank God, then, for the Nell McAndrew shots that followed. Okay, so the set was all a bit *FHM*, but it made a nice antidote to the normal parade of ugly blokes you get in games magazines.

Nell is a genuine gaming personality (of sorts), after all, and not just some Page Three wannabe trollop like you see in some mags. And the sort of lass you wouldn't mind going for chips with either, if your interview is anything to go by. Keep it up guys (I know I will).

Matt Rhodes, Bradford

Here's the deal. On the one hand, we completely agree with Gary's letter: there are too many magazines that use shots of

dodgy "babes" to liven up boring pages. But Nell isn't just another "babe" – right now she's playing a very high-profile role in the UK games scene. People are interested in her, so we gave her some space. It just so happens that she's a model, so we showed pictures of her modelling...

*Okay, so it's nice to print good pictures of an attractive woman every now and again. But we don't do it because we think *Arcade* needs them. And the fact remains that, while *Arcade* is for all gamers, the majority of our readership – just by virtue of the videogame market and the mag-buying public at large – will, like Matt, be twentysomething, heterosexual men. Which leads us to...*

Quivering antenna

Arcade seemed very impressive at first. But as I read more I quickly became very disillusioned. The first bit to get my "uh-oh" antenna quivering was where you said your style would be similar to gents' lifestyle magazines. My heart sank as I anticipated lots of sad, insecure, heterosexual, laddish bullshit.

*My worst fears were confirmed when I read page 43 and saw the question posed to Hideo Kojima, the designer of *Metal Gear Solid*: "Are you calling Western gamers poofs?" As a gay man I find this very insulting and completely unacceptable. I resent paying even a solitary pound to support a publication that feels it's okay to print such discriminatory rubbish. If this is a sign of things to come then I don't want to know. And I haven't even mentioned the *Zelda* article and its obsession with "fairies." Sad.*

Matthew Prior, Norwich

*Yep – a fair call. For what it's worth, the intended spirit of the question was very much a *Sid the Sexist* "Are you staring at my pint?" kind of joke thing. It doesn't sound funny now, but it was meant to be humorous. Still, we could have phrased it differently. As for fairies, come on – you've got to admit fairies are pretty funny.*

Which in no way at all leads us to...

Grey gunk

I think it's about time someone raised a voice to complain about the state of the N64's controllers. You pay £20 only to find that they disintegrate. I'm talking about the 3D sticks. Surely I'm not the only one who's noticed that after a while they fill up with a mysterious grey gunk and begin to become looser but harder to move? I really began to notice the difference in the sticks just recently when I bought a new green one.

Playing with the old controllers is now considered a disadvantage and so we take turns to use each of the controllers. It's ridiculous.

Nick Smith, via e-mail

We've heard from a couple of people with this problem. But how widespread is it? Write in and let us know if you're experiencing grey gunk problems.



■ Nintendo 64's joypad: built to bust?

The Videogame Magazine Arcade

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Rants & Raves

Bloody expensive

It's quite obvious but it needs saying anyway: games are too bloody expensive! One of the many excuses given by publishers for £40-plus prices is a need to recoup development costs. This, on the surface, seems fair enough but the movie *Titanic* cost hundreds of millions of pounds to make and yet you can pick up the video for 15 quid! Surely Sony's Platinum range shows that games could cost just £20 a go, so why not be this price all the time?

Nathan Percival, via e-mail

Yes, new games are expensive. But you can't compare them to videos or Platinum games because in both these cases the publisher has already recouped a lot of his costs (the movie in the cinema, the game at full price) so any extra revenues can be considered "icing on the cake." We'll be looking at this whole "Games. Bloody expensive. Discuss." debate in a later issue.

Five stars

Arcade's five-star scoring system is way insufficient. There's no point in going over the top and giving ridiculous percentages (how many reviewers ever seriously agonise over the difference between awarding 72% or 73%?) but the difference between, say, a three-star (60%) and a four-star (80%) rating is far too wide. Surely scoring out of ten is a lot more preferable.

Dan Ayers, via e-mail

We think five stars are just fine. Face it, in most magazines that use percentages anything under 70% is "crap" and anything over 90% is "brilliant". In reality, they use only a range of 20 points. We don't suggest that you translate our star ratings

near arcade perfect conversion of *Virtua Fighter 3tb*? It really couldn't get better than this. *Godzilla* is disappointing but *Pen Pen* is great graphically, especially the later tracks.

But this is almost all irrelevant, in that you should never judge a console by its first games. Look how much better *Gran Turismo* is than the first *Ridge Racer*.

PlayStation has just got so much better with time, and I'm sure Dreamcast will do exactly the same thing.

James McLaren Sheffield

This is one point of view.

Dreamcast sucks

I was one of the suckers who paid over the odds to be one of the first Dreamcast owners in the country. It sounded so good on paper I couldn't wait to get hold of one. So, the day after it launched in Japan, I rushed out and paid in excess of £500 for this so-called "dream" machine.

Unfortunately, however, I am left totally disappointed with it. Okay, so the graphics are great but the games are as shallow as those that sank the Saturn. I bought *Godzilla Generations* and *Virtua Fighter 3tb* expecting great things – especially from *VF3*. But in reality it doesn't even come close to the sheer gameplay excellence of *Tekken 3* on PlayStation.

It's a real shame – and I warn all other Arcade readers to think carefully before wasting an awful lot of money.

Christopher Jamieson Nairn, Scotland

And this is another. Our look at Dreamcast starts on page 46 of this issue.

Time warped

Just a quick query about "December 1984" (*Arcade* 1, "Retroview", page 175). So Bob Geldof did "Live Aid" and followed that with "Do they know its Christmas" did he? Funny that, because everyone else remembers is as the other way round, "Do they know its Christmas" was released in 1984 and "Live Aid" followed up later.

Dave Clarke, via e-mail

Yes, yes, yes. Well done.

Flap confusion

Why the flap on the front cover of *Arcade*? I couldn't find a single reason for it. Also, how about a feature on

game content that is edited from UK versions of games? *Worms* lost the Batarang in the UK version, *Soul Blade* had a previously naked chick with clothes on and *Resident Evil* lost its gory introduction.

John Panter Wigan

The flap was a cunning magazine publishers ploy to: a) let us put a nice big picture on the front of the magazine without cluttering it up with words; b) get unsuspecting readers such as yourself to pick it up and "interact" with the magazine to see what's underneath. The idea is that if you pick it up, you're more likely to buy it. So that's another one of our trade secrets blown...

CONTRIBUTORS

It's all their fault. Among Arcade's contributors this month you'll find...



Rich Pelley

We spotted staff writer Rich twiddling his thumbs in the corner of the office earlier this month so we decided to pack him off to London to talk about *Arcade* on national television. We forgot to mention that by national we meant Channel 5,

and that he would be appearing live at 6.20am so it was a very sleepy-eyed Mr Pelley who graced our early-morning screens. "I thought they were just going to chat about *Tomb Raider*," he explains, meekly, "but instead they interrogated me about the magazine and accused me of being a videogame geek." Time for a retaliatory blow. "The studio was like a shed, the presenter had never heard of Nintendo and the tea was awful."

Game of the moment: *San Francisco Rush* on N64.

"Everyone else hates it, but I think it's good, honest fun, so I'm making it my cause célèbre for the month."



Jason Brookes

One of our four regular columnists, Jason is one of the most respected games journalists on the planet. As editor of *EDGE* magazine for five years he's forgotten more about videogames than most of us will ever know. Now he's

taking some time off and is a roving correspondent in Japan and America. "There's so much in the world to see and do," he says, "I'm enjoying taking the time to smell the roses." Will he come back to videogame journalism full time? "Maybe," he says, "it's easy to get cynical about the games industry – there are so many companies trying to sell crap. But games are still a great way to relax and have a laugh with your mates. I'll always enjoy them."

Game of the moment: *Zelda 64* on N64: "Final proof that Shigeru Miyamoto is the best games designer ever."



Jude Edginton

Jude has been photographing the videogame industry's mightiest and finest for the last seven years. His pictures of Shigeru Miyamoto (starting on page 66) were taken on four separate occasions over this time period, in three different

countries. His work has taken him all over the world including San Francisco, where he won "Photographer of the Year" award from the *Bay Guardian*, the city's equivalent of *Time Out* magazine. "Taking photographs of games creators is tricky, because unlike musicians or film makers they often don't seek the limelight," he says. "But it's easy, too, because usually they're down-to-earth people who appreciate that posing for a shoot is just part of their job."

Game of the moment: "I don't play games," says Jude, "I've met too many of the nutcases who make them..."



Alvin Weetman

As *Arcade*'s Deputy Art Editor, Alvin's been in charge of tagging up the team for the Games Night photoshoots. Last month he trekked across mountainous terrain (or at least to the other side of town) to hire out snowboarding gear, and this issue he

had to pay a visit to the army surplus store. "They were a bit annoyed when they found we'd written 'Born To Kill' on one of their helmets – and they wanted to know who Mark was. In the end I had to buy it off them and now I wear it around the office. My favourite part of the Games Night is making the guys pull stupid faces and then picking the ones that look worst to go in the magazine. They all have to give me respect or I can embarrass them in print."

Game of the moment: *Pocket Fighter* on PlayStation: "It's just completely mad. One of the characters will suddenly leap on the back of a donkey and start kicking his opponent."



■ **Sega's Dreamcast: will you spend £400 on one this weekend?**



Arcade exit poll

Arcade

■ We want to make *Arcade* the only videogame magazine you'll ever need. Help us by filling out this form (or copy it on to a bit of paper) when you write to *Arcade*.

The best bits this issue are:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

I didn't like _____

to percentage points, but if you have to, think along the lines of one star equating to 70%, two stars 75%, and so on, up to five stars equating to 90%-plus.

Dreamcast rules

Dreamcast is fantastic. I got mine on the 28th November, the day after it launched in Japan and I got a good deal, too. I only paid £600 for the Dreamcast, two pads and all four launch games.

Some of my friends say that they are underwhelmed by it, but I have to ask them what more they could expect than a



■ **Bob Geldof fed the world, but when?**



Cheat
us out of a
Free
PlayStation game.

If you want to get clean away with something really worthwhile, head down to Virgin Megastores. Just collect the stickers that prove you've bought five full-price (£39.99 or more) PlayStation games between now and 31st October 1999 and you'll get a sixth for free! Pop out to your local store and get your hands on a Cheat card today.

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION AT



Offer available 05/10/98 – 31/10/99 on selected titles. See in-store leaflet for full terms and conditions.

GAME ON

The world of videogames: we take you round the globe in four pages

■ A demo mission from EA's upcoming tactical war simulation *Jane's Fleet Command* was used by NBC in the US to recreate Operation Desert Fox.



WAR GAMES



Harpoon SSM
TRACK #: 0105
COURSE: 294
SPEED: 459 KTS
ALTITUDE: 0.1 KFT
ORDERS: Engage

Game Over for Iraq

10 nmi
TIME: 13:02 TIME SCALE: 1x

PC game recreates Operation Desert Fox for NBC TV | TV ratings soar

By Neil West

■ The fine line between videogames and the real world became a little more blurred in late December, courtesy of Electronic Arts and US TV giant NBC. As planes from the US and UK continued cruise missile bombing raids on the Iraqi capital of Baghdad as part of Operation Desert Fox, finishing touches were being put to a recreation of the initial attack, using EA's forthcoming PC title *Jane's Fleet Command*. As coverage of the military action continued round the clock, NBC broadcast extensive footage of EA's re-creation.

Jane's Combat Simulations (an affiliate of EA) is recognised as being a world leader in the

military simulations field. *Jane's Fleet Command*, a complex real-world naval strategy game, was selected for the re-creation for its detailed maps of the Middle East and its accurate 3D models of the world's naval forces. Indeed, it was designed with specific reference to the previous Gulf conflict of 1991, with a view to offering gamers a glimpse of what it was to "be there". In addition, another EA game – *Jane's F-15* – was used by NBC to offer a pilot's eye views of possible attack scenarios from the cockpit of the game's virtual F-15 fighter plane. NBC is believed to be working on further footage in cooperation with the Jane's team for use as the conflict in the Gulf develops.

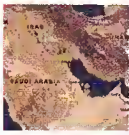
"Jane's is a resource for anybody who wants to report about the military," said EA's Kristen McEntire. "The Jane's information group – from which

EA licenses the *Jane's Combat Simulations* name – has served as a military reference source for decades. If a news organisation uses a Jane's computer game as a military resource then that's just extending the tradition."

This TV exposure is a first for videogames and, while it's far from *Arcade*'s desire to trivialise the Iraqi conflict, it's undeniable

proof that videogames are going places never gone before.

It's a tentative celebration, however. While we salute the advancement of EA's technology, we're also left pondering on the irony of a conflict already reliant on distant button pushes to decide the fate of millions, soon to be repackaged as a £40 videogame thrill.



As Cruise missiles landed on Iraq, EA put the finishing touches to its recreation



Destroy "The Madman"

Videogames return to the Gulf

■ This isn't the first time EA has set a game in the Middle East. Shortly after Operation Desert Storm kicked off in 1990, EA released *Desert Strike* for the Mega Drive. Pitching players in a

heavily armed attack chopper, the aim was to single-handedly take out the growing arsenal of highly naughty military equipment belonging to a man referred to as "The Madman". He had a

big moustache. In the sequel, *Jungle Strike*, the son of The Madman invaded the USA. Your first mission was to save the White House. Bargaining past Ms Lewinsky on the way in, no doubt...



HOT NEW GAMES

The Prix Is Right

Monaco Grand Prix | Gearing up for consoles

By Sam Richards

■ The Monaco Grand Prix is the most decadent sporting event on the calendar. Champagne, caviar and fast ladies all feature, but these are mere bagatelles compared with the glamour of racing at ungodly speeds through Monte Carlo's expensive streets. *Racing Simulation – Monaco Grand Prix* is all about driving – down to the tiniest details of tyre suspension. And there's nary a whiff of caviar until you've mastered the satisfyingly complex intricacies of the game.

Already available for PC, Ubisoft is preparing the game for a console assault. N64 and

PlayStation versions will be released in March. A Dreamcast conversion will follow close behind and, as you can see from the screenshots, it's already looking stunning.

All versions of the game come complete with 17 Grand Prix tracks, 11 car designs, a full range of pit adjustments and stereo sound sampling (allowing you to hear from which side your opponents are trying to overtake).

Ubisoft's licence doesn't stretch to including the actual Grand Prix drivers, but you'll be able to guide your Villeneuve-a-like through a whole range of different championships, tweaking your car along the way, before attempting the actual race itself. There's an Arcade mode (not named after our good selves) for the

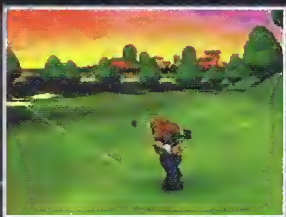
slouches and even a '50s mode in which you can drive vintage bangers (with vintage engines and vintage brakes) around a vintage course. Stylish.

Racing Simulation – Monaco Grand Prix pulls out of the PlayStation and N64 grid in March with the Dreamcast version to follow at the machine's UK launch.



■ Take a look at the age-span. These grabs give you some idea of the sorts of cars you're going to be able to get your hands on.

■ Shigeru Miyamoto: rumours that he may not be working on *Super Mario 64* are as yet unfounded.



SHOCK HORROR

Mario 2 Not true

Super Mario 64 sequel may not happen | Miyamoto "tired" | Eek!

Fans of Nintendo's red-bereted plumber hero are liable to break out in a cold sweat upon hearing the latest news leaking out of Japan. Apparently, Nintendo's top designers (under the leadership of Shigeru Miyamoto) worked so hard in order to finish *Zelda: Ocarina Of Time* that *Mario 64 2*, originally scheduled for 1999, has still not even been started.

Worrying remarks made by Mr Miyamoto himself have lead bystanders to speculate that, amazingly, he may skip any involvement in the development of *Mario 64 2* all together. Further rumours suggest that the game may eventually appear on an as-yet unspecified "new system", if it

sees the light of day at all.

Nintendo gamers are unlikely to be fully placated by the announcement of another Mario offshoot title. Following on from *Mario Party* and *Smash Brothers* (see Coming Soon, page 24), behold *Mario Golf*, a cartoon pitch 'n' putt which will feature a range of Nintendo characters with whom to birdie and bogey your way round eight courses. The 3D scenery should be recognisable to anyone familiar with Mario's other-world adventures, while the gameplay makes use of this-world ball physics.

All of these new Mario-related games will undoubtedly live up to Nintendo's seal of quality. But they're scant consolation for platforming purists. Still, these are just rumours.



Mario 2 may appear on an unspecified "new system"

NEW GAME

Go Ape For Tarzan

Adventure game tie-in for Disney's big summer movie.

Time to strip down to your loincloth, batter your chest and swing about on vines – *Tarzan* is Disney's big animated movie for 1999 and Sony has jumped right in there to get its hands on the PlayStation licence. Despite the grand tradition of totally toss movie tie-in games, here's hoping that developer

Eurocom makes a good job of the be-loinclothed one – after all it made a great job of *Mortal Kombat 4* and *Hercules*. Sony is heaping money on the project and with the film, voiced by Tony Goldwin and Minnie Driver, likely to be a smash, look out for the 3D *Tarzan* action/adventure game near the top of the charts come next autumn.

■ But how does he shave, eh?



SIGHTSEEING

Mount Rushmore

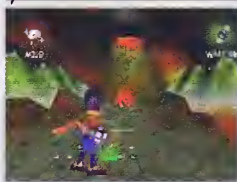
Which is better, videogames or real life? This month: *Pilotwings 64* versus a camera.



INCOMING

Six of the best new games coming your way...

3 months



Milo's Astro Lanes
■ N64 ■ Interplay
■ Spring '99

It's a cross between ten-pin bowling and crazy golf. In space, naturally. Power-ups for the two-player mode include an acid shower.

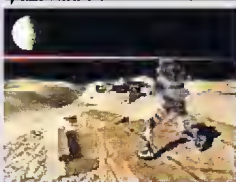
6 months



Dragon Valor
■ PlayStation ■ Namco
■ Summer '99

RPG-tinged adventure boasting generations of gameplay. Yes, your hero buys the farm and you continue as his son and heir.

9 months



Starsiege Tribes
■ PC ■ Dynamix
■ Autumn '99

Cyborgs and robots battle to the death on a distant planet in this futuristic blend of shooter and strategy.



Magical Truck Adventure
■ Coin-Op ■ Sega
■ Autumn '99

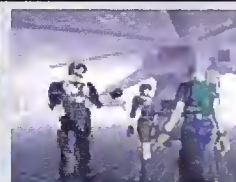
More Japanese mayhem. This time you've got to pump the paddles Laurel and Hardy-style to propel your cart along the track.

1 year



Racing Lagoon
■ PlayStation ■ Square
■ Late '99

Swish touring car racer with an anime feel and proposed RPG elements. Trust the developer (Square's tops) not the game name.



Carrier
■ Dreamcast ■ Jaleco
■ Winter '99

Expansive action adventure set on a spacecraft full of zombies. Ground breaking AI enables you to work as part of a rescue team. Hopefully this will be fun.

■ It's metal. It's gear. It's solid.



■ Action figures. You know. For kids.



Sam Richards' World of Games



Paperboy delivers

■ How fondly we remember those evenings in sea-front arcades attempting to lob papers into mailboxes and avoiding being mown down at the crossroads. Yes, bleary nostalgia has once again prompted a developer to brave the retro game revival minefield. This time it's little-known Jaguar coder High Voltage Software with its *Paperboy 3D* update. The game, set for N64 and PlayStation, won't be ready until winter. Somebody rouse Debbie Greenwood.

N64 goes on-line

■ Nintendo is soon expected to announce plans for a modem add-on for N64. This will supposedly allow for Internet access and enable gamers to download additional game data like extra levels and secret characters. It's best to remain sceptical, however, as we bear in mind the 64DD, a disk drive add-on talked about since the launch of Nintendo 64. Two years later there's still no sign of it.

Fancy it tonight or what?

■ Ah yes, the refreshing alternative realities of Japanese RPGs. First there's Dreamcast title *Climax Landers* – eerily, you're not sure where you are or why you're there. Then we have *Dragon Valor* (see Incoming) where you get to play your own kid when you pop your dogs. Now Atlus brings *Thousand Arms* to the PlayStation in which you need to date the laydeez in order to "extend your spirit level". No sniggering, now.

G-Police Refuels With Diesel

■ Psynosis has again teamed up with Diesel, that doyenne of clothing cool, for the sequel to its highly-anticipated *G-Police*, a game subtitled *Weapons Of Justice*. The original copter-blasting title saw Diesel advertising find its way mysteriously on to the buildings in Callisto's domed-cities while the company knocked up some limited-edition jackets, T-shirts and sweaters bearing the *G-Police* logo in return. Fly.

GAME GEAR

Metal Gear Solid Gear

Limited Edition Premium Packs scheduled for UK | "Be" Solid Snake

By Sam Richards

To make up for the frustrating slippage of the *Metal Gear Solid* release date (now set for 26 February '99), Konami will be bundling limited copies of the PlayStation game in special Premium Packs, exclusive to the UK. At time of writing,

the content of the bundle is still being confirmed, but it is likely to include a *Metal Gear Solid* T-shirt, a book of original artwork, stickers and a CD containing music from the game. As for the price of the Premium Pack, Arcade is assured that "it won't cost much more than an ordinary game".

Konami UK also hopes to strike a deal with US action figure maker McFarlane Toys to bring its

new range of action figures to this country. There are eight figures in the series – Solid Snake, Liquid Snake, Meryl, Vulcan Raven, Ninja, Revolver Ocelot, Sniper Wolf and Psycho Mantis. Each is six inches high and comes with its own

weapons and accessories. Even if you don't want to kneel on the floor re-enacting scenes from the game (and we really don't) the figures should make a cool addition to any voodoo-inspired fertility rituals.



The pack is likely to include a T-shirt, a book of artwork and a CD



SHRINK RAP

Looks Familiar

This month Dr Mark Griffiths, our resident psychologist, sorts out the marketing men. About time too.

■ One of the aspects of videogaming I have observed over the last five years is the way in which games designers and marketers will use almost every play they can to get you to play their latest game. The tactics are becoming ever more and more sophisticated – not least because the gaming market itself is increasing in sophistication as the teenage game players of yesteryear are continuing to play games into their twenties, thirties and beyond.

One of these favoured ploys (whether the perpetrators realise it or not) is the psychology of familiarity. The games manufacturers have realised that one heavy weapon in their huge marketing armoury is to design games which appear familiar before a gamer has ever played them. This can be achieved through using recognisable characters,

worlds and names – or new names which parody or pun on a topical subject. If the man in the games shop recognises something familiar, he or she may be more likely to buy that game.

One of the most commonly deployed tactics to induce familiarity is the creation of games based on films and television shows. There is little doubt that games featuring cult TV shows like *Star Trek* and *The X-Files* will sell very well because completists will want to own all the associated paraphernalia. What's more, it's clear that a game with familiar and popular central characters can sell by the shedload despite the consensus of opinion suggesting a poor game (*Spice World*, for example). This may be good news for the makers of *The Fifth Element*, but it's frustrating for gamers.

I know first hand that there are spin-offs with good gameplay (I've played my fair share of *GoldenEye 007*) but these games appear to be the exception rather than the rule.

My basic argument is that games with TV or movie components have the capacity to make players attend to them longer than they would ordinarily. After initial exposure these games may even induce psycho-structural interactions and relationships for the player. Therefore, if the themes are increasingly "familiar", a player will be increasingly likely to persevere with the complexities of a game and find it more enjoyable. At least as far as marketing and packaging goes, the game's industry knows what it's doing.

■ Dr Mark Griffiths lectures at Nottingham Trent University.

Smack my pitch up

Another of Arcade's game ideas gets sent to an unfortunate expert.

No. 3 Rules Explosion!

■ **The pitch:** Welcome to the world's craziest sport sim! Those wacky dudes down under are bringing their mad, random, and unduly physical game Aussie Rules to our consoles. Although the in-game tactical editor is immensely complex, it's entirely superfluous. *Rules Explosion* utilises a revolutionary new control system which perfectly replicates a real game of Aussie Rules: joypad buttons are not assigned a particular function, but a sequence of presses will activate moves at random.

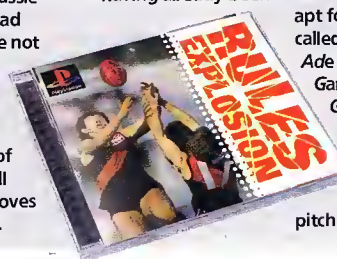
Maybe your player will lob the ball in the air, maybe he'll try to kick it towards the posts or maybe he'll run along trying to bounce it like a basketball. Who knows? It'll be just like watching *Eurosport* at 3am.

■ **The response:** "I think the northern hemisphere has been crying out for an Antipodean free-for-all game for decades. The control method is nothing new, having already been

done in *Rise Of The Robots*, but no matter, there is still room for innovation elsewhere. I particularly like the potential for player creation. You could assign important attributes such as tolerance to tinnies of the amber nectar, mullets rated by aerodynamic quality (streamlined speed trades off with increased "hang time") and a player's ability to catch and strip a sheep. Never was a game more apt for a top scorer called Shearer!"

Ade Carless, Senior Games Designer, Gremlin.

■ **Next month:** Another crap pitch gets slapped.



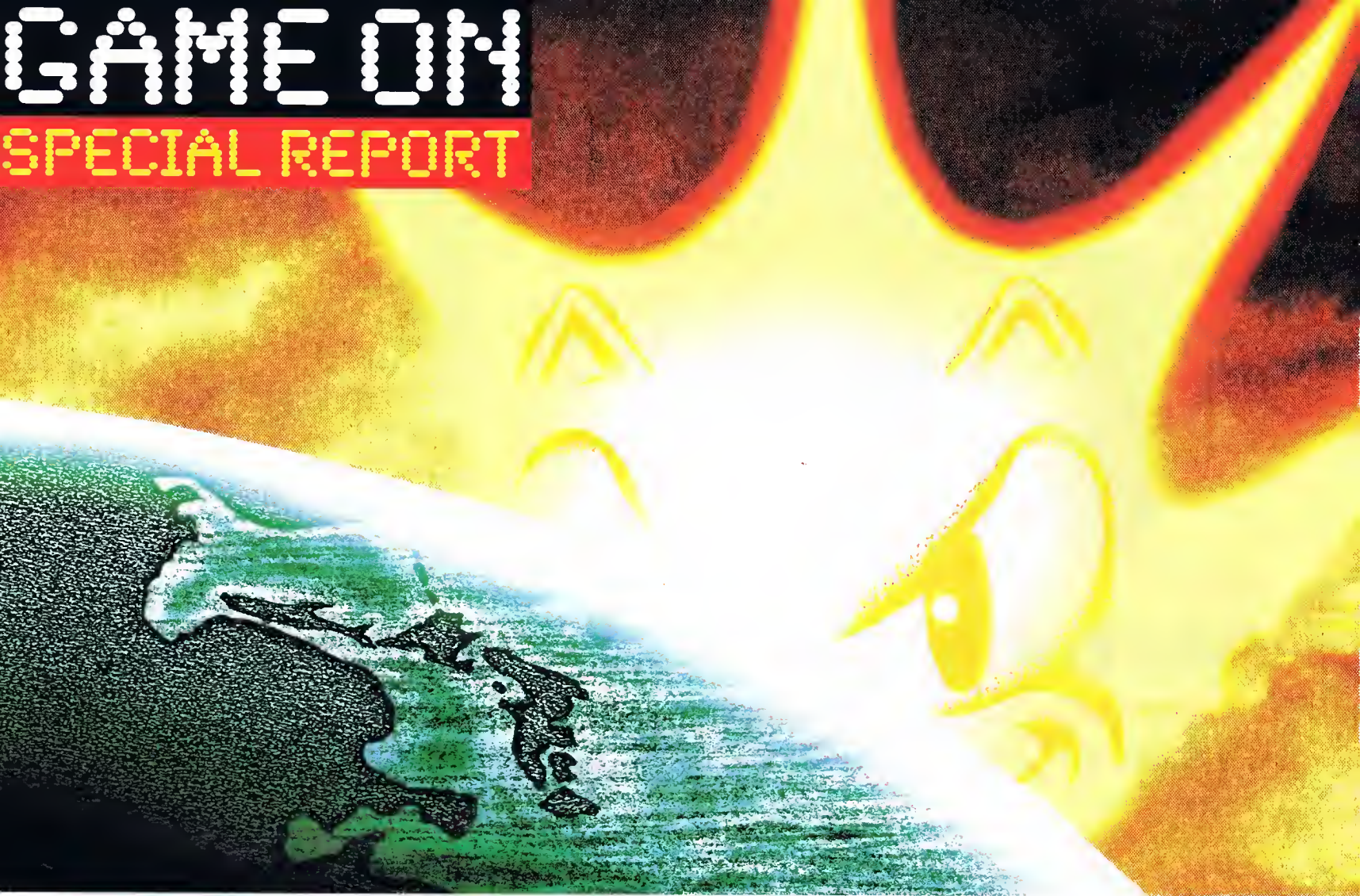


ILLUSTRATION: MATT KENYON

NEWS ANALYSIS

A new dawn for Sega as Dreamcast launches in Japan. Next stop, the UK

Panic on the streets of Tokyo | *Sonic the Hedgehog* conspicuous by his absence...

By Dave Roberts

There were queues, of course there were queues. At least there were pictures of queues. But that's only because back in the late '80s the Japanese government passed a law making it illegal to launch any new console without it being accompanied by a selection of horribly contrived press reports of stores opening at midnight, frantic punters suffocating in the crush, besieged shop owners calling the riot police, blah, blah, blah. There were queues for 3DO for goodness sake.

Never heard of 3DO? Exactly. And there was a suspicion of stage-management surrounding Dreamcast's arrival in Sega's homeland. The only genuine sense of urgency emanating from the firm's PR company, desperately processing beautiful pictures of packed games shops. There were also a few back-stage cock-ups, with production problems and yet more game delays taking the shine off Sega's return to the spotlight.

Just to recap, the importance of Dreamcast to Sega simply cannot be overestimated. The company used to be the dominant force in the

global games market, with its Mega Drive out-gunning all rivals in the early '90s. But it's had a torrid time since then, with a series of stop-gap bridging products such as Mega CD and 32X leading eventually to the full scale disaster that was Saturn: launched just a few months before the arrival of PlayStation, and found dead in the water just a few months later. That's why Dreamcast is literally a do-or-die format for the firm. And its early reception in Japan was the first real test of its power.

It arrived on 27 November (impressively enough the exact date it was targeting nearly a year ago, before delays pushed the

system's launch back a year) priced at ¥29,800 (£150). This would suggest we'll see a UK price of £199 next autumn.

Sega had hoped to deliver 300,000 Dreamcasts to

Japanese gamers in the first weekend, but in the end could only muster less than half that number. Its plans were hit hard by problems with Dreamcast's graphics chip, a component designed by leading-edge UK technology firm VideoLogic and manufactured by Japanese electronics group NEC. Sega's PR team initially tried to cover-up its predicament with bullish talk of demand far out-stripping supply. While this was technically true, it failed to acknowledge the fact that this was simply because supply was woefully short of its own original projections.

The rumours of potential shortages had been circulating





■ Hip or hype? Sega made sure no one missed Dreamcast's launch. Orange logos were everywhere.

for a while. Sega's president Shoichiro Irimajiri admitted, a couple of weeks before launch, that NEC's production was running at only about 30% of the company's anticipated levels. It has subsequently improved and Sega insists it is back on track to hit its first significant target: one million machines delivered to Japanese shops by March 31st. If it fails to catch-up, however, the knock-on effect could be a late launch in Europe. Certainly Sega wouldn't consider making a move anywhere else in the world until supply is plentiful in Japan.

Sega Europe also needs its parent company to make a full success of Dreamcast on its home turf, because it knows that the console won't make any sort of impact over here without a massive marketing war chest. The firm's currently projecting a \$100 million spend this year, but that will be funded by Dreamcast sales in Japan. Saturn certainly isn't generating any revenue. Its PC games are doing okay, but they're not going to drum up the sort of cash needed to push Dreamcast into a position alongside Sony's all-conquering PlayStation.

At least a delay may help Sega get its games in order in time for Dreamcast's UK launch. On 27 November, just four games were available and only one, *Virtua Fighter 3tb*, came complete with built-in "wow" factor. The others – *Godzilla Generations*, *Pen Pen Tricelon* and *July* – appealed to various niche markets to differing



degrees. Not the stuff on which great businesses can be built. Unfortunately, the two most eagerly anticipated Dreamcast titles, *Sonic Adventure* and *Sega Rally Championship 2* were both delayed. As *Arcade 3* goes to press, *Sonic Adventure* is set to be released in Japan. *Sega Rally 2* is expected in mid-January.

If that dynamic duo had been available from launch, alongside *VF3tb*, then Dreamcast really would have rocketed off the blocks, undeniably off to a flyer. As it is, a lot of gamers have elected to wait before parting with their cash. While this is bad news for current Dreamcast owners, it's a good sign that Sega is willing to take flak for being late if the result will be two properly polished, truly great games.

By the end of February, Dreamcast's catalogue of games will have grown to 14 with

Monaco Grand Prix and *Incoming* (a conversion of *Rage*'s PC hit and the first Dreamcast title from a UK development team) amongst the most prominent forthcoming attractions. Sega hopes that around 30 titles will be on hand to support the European launch.

One of the most interesting aspects of Dreamcast's Japanese debut has been the strong take-up of Dreamcast's on-line facilities. The console comes bundled with a modem and *Dream Passport* software that provides users with Internet access – one of the main ideas being to encourage net gaming throughout a Dreamcast "community".

Apparently one-in-three of the first 150,000 consumers has

A lot of gamers are keeping their cash until Dreamcast games get better

logged on and signed up. Sega claims this is a higher ratio than it expected and it could have some bearing on whether or not a modem is bundled in Europe or comes as a standalone peripheral. That crucial decision (which will also effect pricing, obviously) is being made round about now.

So was Dreamcast's launch a success? It suffered from glitches, undoubtedly, but Sega makes a convincing enough case to give it a pass mark after its first examination, with "Can do better" the inevitable caveat. Sony Computer Entertainment's

European boss Chris Deering elects to reserve judgement, but still can't hide an element of condescension in his assessment: "We are respectful of Sega's ambitions, but they still have a lot of baggage from the past. Certain hobbyists try all new game systems. Whether Saturn 2" [ouch] "can get beyond this group remains to be seen." But then he would say that.



■ Want to know more? Dreamcast is on page 46. You'll find reviews of all the games starting on page 132.

"My Beautiful Arcade"

Who's hanging out in arcades these days? *Arcade* skives off and has a thoroughly good laugh, all in the name of research



PHOTOGRAPHY: JUDE EDGINTON

THIS MONTH

Segaworld, London

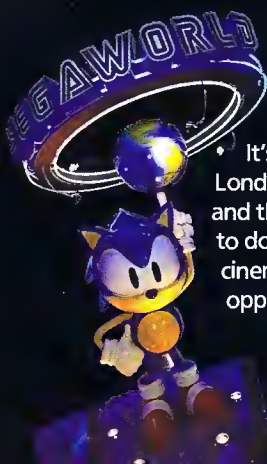
Slot check

- Place: **Segaworld**
- Where: **The Trocadero, 1 Piccadilly Circus, London, W1**
- Size: **110,000 sq ft over six floors**
- Games: **Over 400 coin-ops and simulators, mostly (but not exclusively) Sega**
- How much? **Free entry, games cost £1 per go**
- Telephone: **0171 734 2777**
- Opening hours: **Sun-Thurs, 10am-midnight; Fri-Sat, 10am-1am. Open all year except Christmas day**

The games are expensive, there's a big bias towards Sega (obviously), it lacks a little soul (there are no old classics – and fag butts are decidedly think on the ground) and, at the other

extreme, where's all of the state-of-the-art stuff? Why was there no *SpikeOut*? But, all this aside, Segaworld rocks.

It's easy to pop in if you're in London; the people are friendly and there's loads of extra stuff to do – there's even an IMAX cinema. A visit is also a great opportunity to brush up on your foreign languages.



"Me and my friend were shopping in Piccadilly Circus. We thought it would be fun to play some videogames."

Iris

18, Iceland



Hello. What are you playing?

"It's called *Harley Davidson & LA Riders*. It's funny. You get to ride around LA on an enormous motorbike. I like motorbikes."

Um, do you come here often?

"No, I'm from Iceland and I'm just in London on holiday. Me and my friend were in Piccadilly Circus and we thought it would be fun to come and play some videogames."

What do you do in Iceland? "I work in an office for the military."

Do you have videogames in Iceland? "Of course!" [angrily]

"Everyone thinks Iceland is just this freezing block of ice with penguins, and polar bears, and things. But it's not true!"

Sorry. "That's okay, but it does make me cross." [Smiles again]

Who's your friend? "She's Anna. She's 20 and she works in a kindergarten."

Hello Anna! "Hello!"

Where are you going next?

"We're going to Planet Hollywood, after we've played some more of this game. I want to ride along the beach – that will be cool."



"My Beautiful Arcade"

Segaworld,
London



Jacques
50, Paris



Hello. What are you playing?

"*Manx TT Superbike*. I used to have a motorbike like this when I was younger..." [smiles, and gets a misty, faraway look in eyes]

How come you're in Segaworld?

"I'm working in the area and have 20 minutes until my next appointment, so I thought I'd come in and relax."

What's your job? "I'm an advertising manager."

Sounds like a busy job. Do you get a chance to play many games?

"Yes, I love games. I play on my PC over the Internet. These arcade games are fun, but actually I prefer adventure games where you have to think a little bit more."

Are you any good at *Manx TT* then? "Just watch!" [Wins race]

Not bad at all. "Pretty good for an old man, eh?"



"I used to have a motorbike like this when I was younger..."

"What do I think of Lara Croft? You picked a bad moment to ask me!"



Bo & Diana 36 & 28, London

Hello. What are you playing?

"It's called *House of the Dead* and it's a shooting game."

Diana, how come you and Bo are in Segaworld today? "We're actually looking for one of those little stamp machines that takes photos of you and then makes funny little stickers."

We've heard that excuse before... "It's not an excuse! I'd admit it if we came to play games! We have a PlayStation at home!"

So what are your favourite games? "*Tomb Raider* and *Tekken*." **And which of the two do you prefer?** "*Tekken*."

Bo, what about you? "I prefer *Tomb Raider*."

Why? "Well, *Lara Croft* really."

How do you feel about Lara?

[Gets poke in the ribs from Diana] "Um, I can't really express my feelings about *Lara* now." [Gets a hard stare] "You've picked a bad moment to ask me."



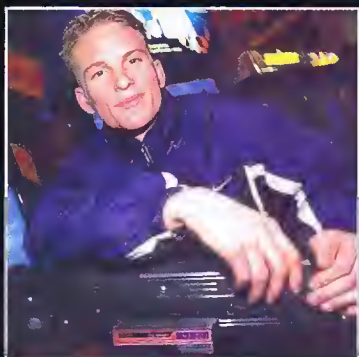
"My Beautiful Arcade" Segaworld, London

Bob & Belinda 38 & 41, Holland

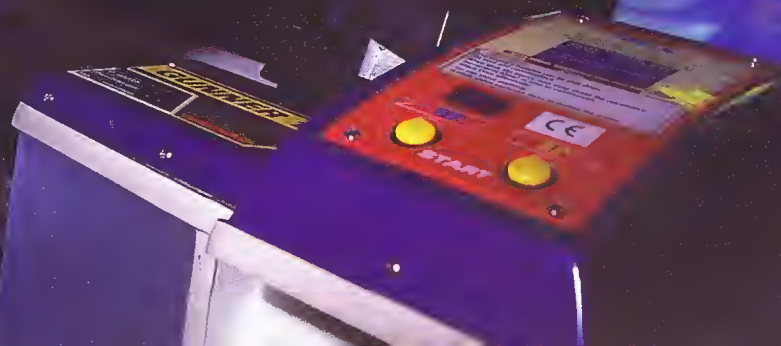


Hello. What are you playing?
"Alpine Racer 2. It's fun because we came to London instead of going skiing – this way we can do both."
Who's best? [Both] "Me!"
How come you're in Segaworld today? "We were shopping, and we needed a rest."
Do you have arcades like this in Holland? "Not really. There are some, but they are a lot smaller."
Okay, have fun. "We will, thanks, bye!"

Marcus 21, New Zealand



Hello. What are you playing?
"It's Gunblade New York, you get to fly around in a helicopter blasting terrorists with a machine gun."
You like it? "Yeah! The gun's got a great recoil action – it feels just like the real thing."
Do you come to Segaworld often? "I've only been in England for three weeks, but I've come here a couple of times."
Do you play games at home?
"Of course. I share a house with some other guys and we've got a PlayStation. My favourite game is Gran Turismo."
Have you checked out those Italian girls playing Time Crisis 2?
"Yeah, but they're a little young."
Right, they're only 15 and 16.
"That's too bad."
Hmm. Never mind, eh? "Yeah. Still, there are plenty more fish in the sea."





Lorenza & Piera 15 & 16, Italy

Hello. What are you playing? "It is called *Time Crisis 2*. We like this game. It's fun to shoot things."

What brought you to Segaworld? "We wanted to play in Segaworld in the Trocadero because in Italy it is very famous."

Really? "Yes. We have nothing like this in Italy. My little brother will be very jealous when he finds out that we've been here. But we're not here to play games. We're here to meet boys." [giggles]

So you like boys who play videogames? "Of course. As long

as they do other things as well."

Had any luck? "We saw two nice English boys just now, but I think you scared them off."

Hey, that's the law of the jungle, right? "I don't know what you mean."

Um, do you play videogames at home? "I play *FIFA* on PlayStation."

What's the best team? "Italy, of course. They are a far better team than England. I will challenge anyone to beat me."

Well, happy hunting!
"Okay, ciao!"



**"We're not here to play games.
We're here to meet boys."**

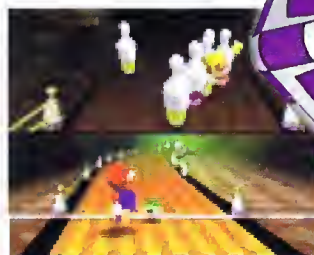
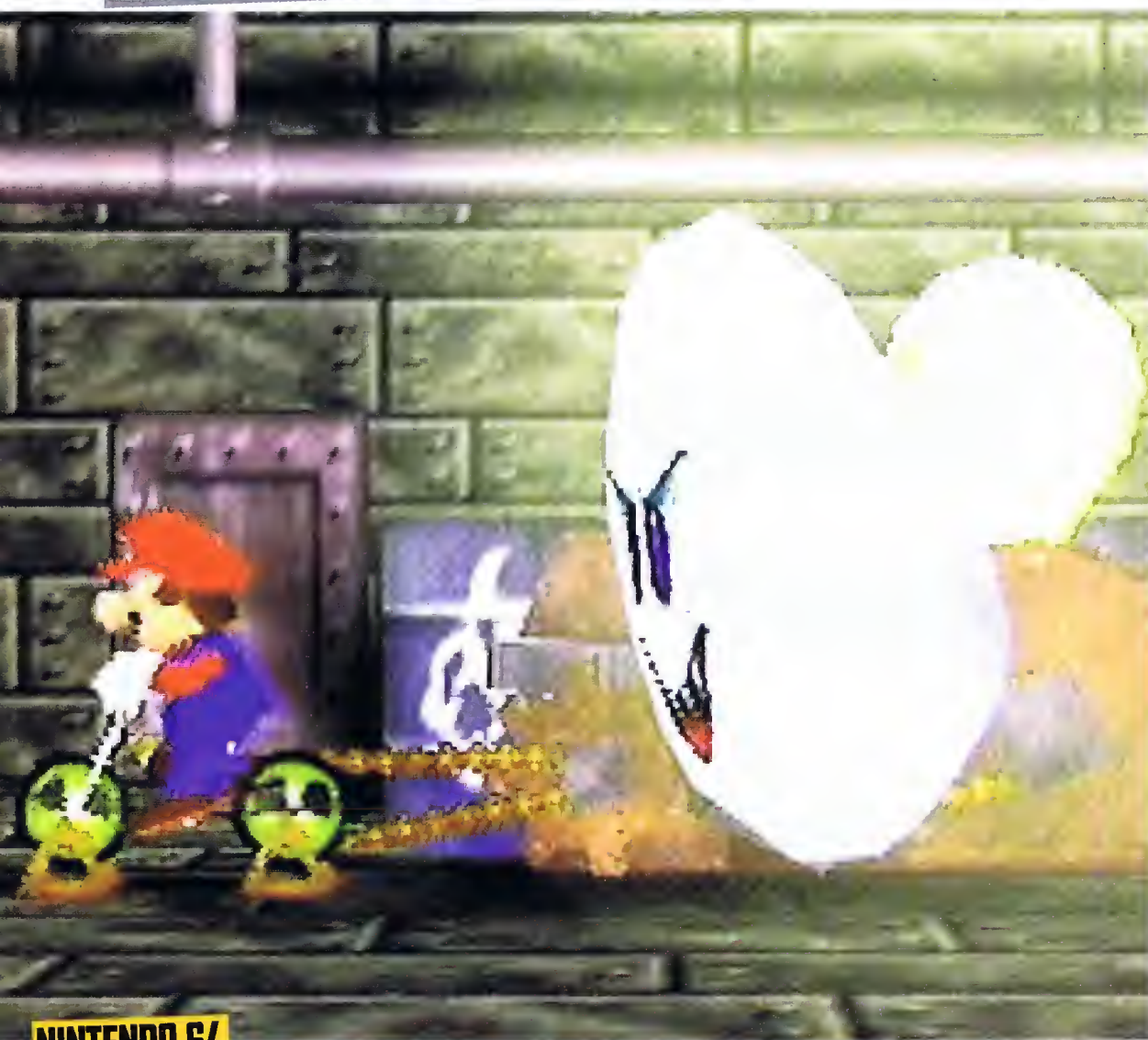
Your beautiful arcade...

■ Where's your favourite arcade? Who hangs out there? Are the games any good? Does it have one of those "grabby" things? We want to know. We may even come and sample the hot dogs.

Write to us at
My Beautiful Arcade.
Arcade,
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath BA1 2BW
Fax us on: 01225 732375
E-mail us at: arcade.mag@futurenet.co.uk

COMING SOON

A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



■ Diving, bowling, throwing things at Bowser, inflating a ghost with a bicycle attached to a dynamo and pump – it will be the mini sub-games that make Mario Party special. You will play some solo, while others are expected to involve the other players. You can rest assured that social interaction ranks highly on Nintendo's development agenda.

NINTENDO 64

MARIO PARTY

Mario's back, he's having a party and everyone's invited. Mario, Wario, Yoshi, Princess Daisy, Luigi and Donkey Kong will all be there, and you can gatecrash with three of your mates.

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** Mario Party takes the familiar Mario universe and implements it in a family-style boardgame, but with plenty (and we do mean plenty) of Nintendo magic.

It's so often the problem. You have a few friends around for dinner, make the effort, put on *The Best Classical Album In The World Ever*, iron your shirt, buy the food from Waitrose (or, if you want to really impress, from Marks & Spencer), serve nibbles and aperitifs, dish up the main course, blowtorch a couple of crème brûlées for desert, scrape the mould off the cheese in the fridge (where applicable) and then, blimey! You've forgotten the after-dinner entertainment. There's an N64 under the TV, but somehow blasting each other's brains out with Kalashnikovs and Magnum RCP 40s in multi-player *DeathMatch GoldenEye* doesn't quite seem to fit with the mood.

More social interaction is called for – you need something that will stimulate conversation and ensure that your guests aren't eyeing the cloakroom for their coats. A boardgame, perhaps? Where's that *Monopoly* set gone?



■ As you can see from all of these pretty pictures, as soon as Nintendo decided to do a board-style game, it stirred in plenty of traditional Nintendo ingredients. Visually Mario Party looks as good as any other Mario Family game, and you can be sure the gameplay will be just as deep and absorbing.

But you've lost all the hotels, and no one ever wants to be the Boot. Come on, N64, you must have something to offer to save the day?

Enter, through cigar smoke and the nose of a good brandy, *Mario Party*, a boardgame, but for your N64. Video boardgames are almost always shouted down from the outset as being: "a bad idea." They are inconvenient (it's easier to play at a table than huddled around a telly), over-complicated (it's hard to maintain a polite, caring smile as you explain the function of a joypad to your Granny for the fourteenth time) and, in many cases, they are redundant: why shell out for the virtual version of a family classic that you've got sitting under your bed anyway?

But this is Nintendo, and those rules don't hold. *Mario Party* is set

THE SUB-GAMES FEATURE ALL OF YOUR NINTENDO FAVOURITES AND SPAN A VARIETY OF GAME STYLES

FACT FILE

MARIO PARTY
FORMAT: N64
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: HUDSONSOFT
PLAYERS: 1-4
ON SALE: TBA

round the basic board format, and you do get to roll dice, but the similarities to other board games ends there. Each square holds one of 50 different sub-games each one of which will earn you coins and stars. The sub-games feature all your Nintendo Favourites and span a variety of different gaming styles, some to be played solo



SIX PACK

Mario Party features all the Nintendo favourites. As it's a party, we feel we should introduce you.



Mario

■ The most famous small, Italian plumber (with a moustache) in the world, in any world actually.



Wario

■ Mario's arch enemy and alter ego. Funny eyes, a jagged 'tache and lots and lots of attitude.



Yoshi

■ Mario's pet dinosaur, has a similar relationship to Mario as Dino does to Fred Flintstone.



Princess Daisy

■ Sweet, sugary, suggestive and she makes the luscious Lara Croft look like Bella Emberg.



Donkey Kong,

■ An overweight, hairy gorilla (not a monkey). Predictably enough, he likes bananas.



Luigi

■ Mario's younger, thinner brother. Wears green. Played by John Leguizamo in the movie.

and others to involve any number of the other players sat round the TV.

There are eight different gaming boards available, each hosted by familiar characters, and called things like Mario's Rainbow Castle, Yoshi's Tropical Island and Donkey's Jungle Adventure. The board layout is reminiscent of the level

pathway map layout of *Super Mario* on the SNES with its zig-zag routes and zany, colourful landscape, but there's plenty of *Mario World 64* influence, with large, 3D models of the characters, and even a tinge of *Mario Kart*-style celebration screens where each player stands on the pile of coins

they've accumulated during the course of the game.

The way to look at *Mario Party* is not just as boardgame, but as 50 mini multi-player N64 games linked together and tapping deep into the human competitive spirit in the way Nintendo does so well. Which'll be your favourite sub game? The two-player bowling one? The mini racing one? The bob-sleigh race? The diving one? The one where you each have to lob balls at big Koopas? The one where you all run around balancing on beach balls? From the screenshots (and unfortunately, so far screenshots are all we've seen), there's going to have to be something pretty special to beat the game where you have to inflate a ghost with a pump attached to a bicycle dynamo. We want to play it right now.



COMING SOON
A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



■ Realism is a key quality of the game – even Nas's sticky-out ears are lovingly drawn.

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** Boxing game starring Britain's fast-talking, leopard-skin-wearing, undefeated champion.

Adding Sheffield steel to the PlayStation's 1999 line-up is Codemasters' *Prince Naseem Boxing*. Endorsed by and starring boxing's own 24-year-old royal dignitary, the Codemasters game eschews conventional – and often sluggish – motion-captured boxers in favour of fighters with moves created after hours of scrutinising fight videos. The result is a game with all the speed and silky moves of Nas himself, and one which could well out-point the heavyweight competition from EA's *Knockout Kings* and JVC's *Victory Boxing 2*.

Naseem has been offering advice throughout the game's development and he's been keen to stress that complete control should be top of Codemasters' priorities. The PlayStation pad's buttons are used for the jabs, hooks and blocks, and Naseem-style body swerves and taunts are made using combinations of these and the shoulder buttons. Similarly, every bout Naseem participates in begins

with his customary somersault and shuffle into the ring, again at the Nas's request – and face it, you wouldn't want to turn him down...

Fights take place within a number of international rings, with each of 16 pugilists taking on challengers on their home turf. The boxers are somewhat unconventional to say the least, with Naseem lining up alongside a crew of squaddies, martial artists and punch-drunk old pros, all with distinctive fighting styles. The clichéd martial artist, for example, has lightning-fast reflexes, while the game's reigning champion – Slick Daddy Ellis – is undefeated in 14 title challenges.

Realism has been Codemasters watchword, but the tournaments mix featherweights with the Tyson-esque heavy brigade, and players adopt different techniques to defeat each

PLAYSTATION

PRINCE NASEEM BOXING

Succeed where others have failed.
Go all the way with the ring king.



■ **Flexible skeleton builds for each of the virtual boxers mean that your opponents feel the full force of blows. Heads snap back, mouths grimace and sweat flies through the air. It's possibly the closest you'll ever get to a Vegas ringside seat.**



A GAME WITH ALL THE SPEED AND SILKY MOVES OF NAS HIMSELF

weight. This setup enables Codemasters to flex its animation muscles, with the assorted fighters performing dozens of moves.

The fighters are built on flexible skeletons, with a system that ensures realistic movement – heads snap back from a hit on the jaw and it's obvious when tiredness sets in. The level of detail extends to touches that include sweat flying as punches land.

Codemasters has included three full game modes. The arcade mode is a straight slug-fest for the title. You play each of the boxers in order, with Slick Daddy Ellis' title belt as the prize.

For wannabe Don Kings, the World Game reveals a strategic bent, as you guide one of 90 boxers to glory, controlling each aspect of the fighter. Training, diet and balancing the books are all part of the job, but this has been kept simple with the statistics cast aside in favour of an icon-driven interface. The final mode is a Practice mode set within Nas's gym, and all designed using photos taken from his Sheffield base camp.

Codemasters has worked hard to create a boxing game that also has arcade immediacy. The result reflects the style of its leopard-skin-wearing inspiration. *Prince Naseem Boxing* already out-points its rivals in terms of speed and boasts a fluid control system where your punches can be strung together to form flurries Nas himself would be proud of.

FACT FILE

PRINCE NASEEM BOXING
FORMAT: PC, PLAYSTATION
DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS
PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS
PLAYERS: 1-8
ON SALE IN UK: SPRING 1999

PLAYSTATION BLOODLINES

Playground British Bulldog? Ha! A game for kids. Take a look at this for ultra-violent tag.

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** Formerly known as *Tribal*, *Bloodlines* combines sprinting around with lashings of violence and a big cast of tasty looking beat-'em-up characters. You'll only stop running when you have to start fighting...

FACT FILE

BLOODLINES
FORMAT: PLAYSTATION
DEVELOPER: RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT
PUBLISHER: SONY
PLAYERS: 1-4
ON SALE IN UK: FEBRUARY

pulling game of chase as the very young know it. The 11 characters look like beat-'em-up protagonists and each comes appropriately armed with special

Ah, the simple game of "chase". If you thought the off-ground and kissing variations were just about as exciting as the whole experience got, you'll need to brace yourself for *Bloodlines*, Sony's far-future, beat-'em-up take on legging it round tagging people.

Known as *Tribal* until very recently, *Bloodlines* takes the favoured playground pastime of Kia-ora-addled children, shifts it into 3D arenas and introduces the sort of head-stoving unpleasantness you usually see in *Mortal Kombat* or *Tekken*. The basic aim is brutally simple. You and an opponent run around trying to change markers to your appointed colour by touching them. The first player to reach a marker becomes "it" and can then set off changing markers to their colour. The other player has to tackle them before they reach the designated number needed to win the match. Tag someone and you win back control and can start changing the markers to your colour.

It might sound pretty inoffensive, but the level of violence is far beyond the dinner lady-troubling, jumper-

moves and combos that are used to tackle rivals. Expect to meet the likes of Lupo Kahuna with his Earthquake special move and the incendiary boss character J.O.E (Judge Of Everyone) who can engulf opponents in a massive fireball.

Power-ups and great pick-up weapons litter the place. You can lay mines, shoot each other, put walls down to suddenly block an opponent's path and, in the obviously named Marbles power-up, scatter small spheres on the ground to create moments of cool slapstick comedy. It all adds up to a very hectic bout of running around causing grief

Bloodlines is easy to pick up and play but, providing developer Radical Entertainment gets the balance right, should include the strategy of a sound beat-'em-up as well, as you try to find a way around an opponent's defences while making sure you're not prone to attack. It's sure to provoke plenty of swearing, particularly in the four-players-in-one arena multi-player mode. We'll review *Bloodline's* in the next issue of *Arcade*.



■ **Chuck away all the rules – it's a case of every man for himself in this violent version of tag.**



COMING SOON
A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



PC

SMASH BROTHERS

Another excuse for the Family Nintendo to get together for a knees-up (and a big scrap).

■ IN A NUTSHELL: Mario: the beat-'em-up.

It's an age old question – who could have who in a fight? It's a question that can be also be applied to the notable and to the commonality alike. Vinnie Jones vs Grant Mitchell? Julian Clary vs John Inman? Your Dad vs my Dad? And how about the Nintendo game characters? Who would win if you stuck Mario and Donkey Kong into a ring and had them taunt "Your Mum does it for bananas", and "My 12-year-old cousin has more facial hair than you", respectively?

One of the most interesting aspects of *Smash Brothers* (in which you do get to pit Nintendo superstars against each other), is the choice of characters on offer. It would have been easy for Nintendo to rehash the old favourites from *Mario Kart*, as happened in *Mario Party* (see page 24). Not that it would have been a bad thing, of course – Luigi sparring against Mario in a bit of sibling rivalry, the battle of the fattest as Donkey Kong takes on Bowser, or Princess Daisy standing up for women's rights as Toad takes a swift,

stiletto-dad kick in the groin – if, being a toadstool, he has one. But Nintendo, being Nintendo, decided that such a solution would be too obvious, and has instead waved a probing spotlight over its back catalogue to see which characters would prove the most interesting.

Remember *Super Metroid* on the SNES? A sort of side-viewed platformer set in space? You played Samus, a character dad in metallic armour who fantastically turned out (when you died) to be an attractive girl in a bikini. She's in it. Kirby, the cute little pink balloon with flippers who starred in a series of eponymous games, such as *Kirby's Fun House*, *Kirby's Dream Land* and *Kirby's Bowling*, is there too. As is Pikachu – a sweet little yellow pocket monster with pointy ears, who started life as



SURELY YOU CAN'T HIT FOX MCCLOUD. IT'D BE LIKE TRIPPING THE QUEEN MUM DOWN THE STAIRS

an official Nintendo Virtual Pet and progressed on to the Game Boy. One chap we can't quite believe to be here is Fox McCloud, the gentleman fox from *StarWing* on the SNES and *Lylat Wars* on the N64. He's an officer and a gentleman, you can't hit *him*, we thought. It'd be like tripping the Queen Mum down the stairs. And, fantastic as *The Legend of Zelda* is, you can't help wonder whether Link would be a good character to pick in a beat-'em-up. He

does, after all, wear tights and a skirt and hang around with fairies.

It's the combination of these less expected Nintendo characters with the more predictable faces of Mario, Yoshi and Donkey Kong, however, that makes *Smash Brothers* sound so exciting.

All we've had our hands on so far are screenshots (which we share with you here), and a clutch of vague information: each character has his or her own specific arena, four players can play at a time and power-ups and obstacles play a crucial part. Also, each character has a special ability, for example Link uses his Master Sword, Fox McCloud uses his Blaster, and Yoshi can eat the opponents and lay them out as eggs (which, when you come to think about it, is pretty gross). We wait with bated breath.

PLAYSTATION NINTENDO 64

35IXTY

The best thing to do with your friends and a game – racing and shooting combined.

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** Futuristic, water-based racing game with weapons

FACT FILE

35IXTY
■ **FORMAT:** PLAYSTATION, N64
■ **PUBLISHER:** CRYO
■ **DEVELOPER:** SMART DOGS
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-4
■ **ON SALE:** SPRING 1999

Global warming's a bummer, isn't it? If only we'd all been content to put up with a bit of BO in the late '80s, instead of insisting that our armpits smell of Oriental and Java (whatever the hell they are), maybe we'd have been okay.

The melting of the ice caps and the gradual rise of sea levels is not something that 35ixty's plot takes lightly. It's a futuristic racing game, where you speed about in mini-skimming ships that look like rejects from an Alton Towers' water ride. The entire world has flooded and subsided so the courses are set in places such as London (now covered in ice, thanks to a dramatic change in temperature), a theme park covered in lava and a dried-out sea bed.

Each level is divided into four sub-levels. The first three are straight racetracks where your rewards for gaining a position in the placings are weapons: torpedoes, rockets, flame

throwers, cluster bombs and so on. You then use these weapons in the final arena, where the idea is one of survival – you must kill the

other players before they kill you. In split-screen mode, up to four players can compete at a time (presumably requiring a multi-tap on the PlayStation), and you can play either full four-match games, or skip straight to the battle arenas, if that's what your mood dictates.

And, at the moment, that's all we know about 35ixty. We'll shut up, then, and leave room for some screenshots. A picture, after all, paints a grand of words...



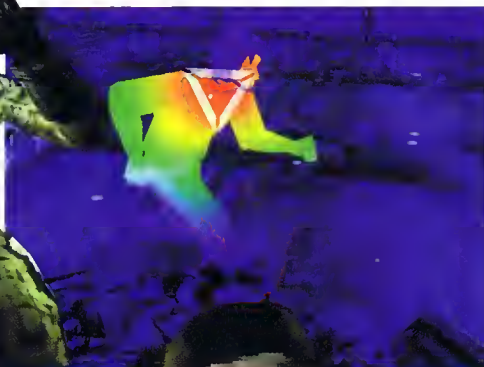
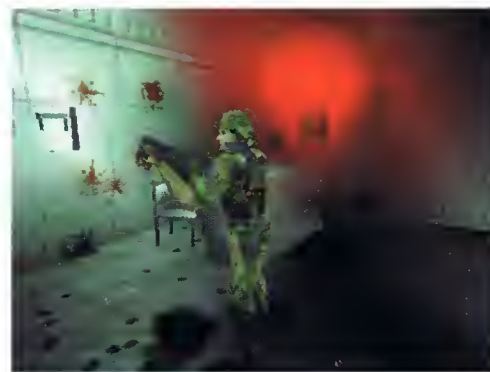
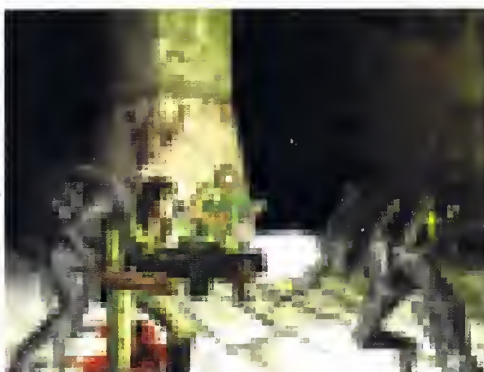
■ Of course, the proof is always in the pudding with racing games, and fantastic as 35ixty sounds, it's not until we get our hands on a movable demo that we'll be able to come up with any final judgement. The screenshots look nice, though, don't they? We'll shut up now.



FACT FILE

SMASH BROTHERS
■ **FORMAT:** N64
■ **DEVELOPER:** HAL
■ **PUBLISHER:** NINTENDO
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-4
■ **ON SALE:** TBA

COMING SOON
A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



■ *Aliens Vs Predator* is a dark, moody and truly scary piece of software engineering. It features a brand new 3D engine that, with a 3D card, puts the likes of *Quake* and *Unreal* to shame in terms of speed and smoothness. Just check out the detail in these screenshots.



PC

ALIENS Vs PREDATOR

Many first-person shoot-'em-ups are scary, but *Aliens Vs Predator*, based on the Dark Horse comic of the same name, will scare the pants off you. Perhaps it's best not to wear any...

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** First-person shooter played in one of three ways: as a Marine vs the Aliens and the Predators, as an Aliens vs the Marines and the Predators, or as a Predator vs the Aliens and the Marines. Got all that?

Comics often bring together characters from different scenarios and pitch them together to see who rules: *Superman vs Batman*, *the Hulk vs Judge Dredd*, *Aliens vs Predators*. It's a fantastic idea, so why not move it to videogames?

Fox Interactive has done just that with this latest atmosphere-oozing slash fest for the PC which pits the frantic, slimy, merciless Aliens with their kamikaze-style attacks against the slower, more methodical, but invisible and just as merciless, Predators. Stick in a third side, the cannon-fodder we call the Marines, and what you've got is the backdrop to *Aliens Vs Predator*.

Firstly, we opted to play as the Marines. We had great fun frying the alien bastards alive with flame-throwers, watching them dance the merry jig of death as we blew their limbs off with the machine gun, and seeing their



■ *Alien Vs Predator* brings a whole new angle to the first person shoot-'em-up, enabling you to face the music as one of three sides: you can play as an Alien, as a Predator or, if tradition is your middle name, as a Marine and blast the ugly mothers into the next world and beyond.

NINTENDO 64

CHAMELEON TWIST 2

Gorillas? Bears? Birds? Geckos? It doesn't look like Nintendo is going to run out of animals for you to play any time soon.

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** Typical platform-and-ladders-style game featuring a small lizard with a long tongue

FACT FILE

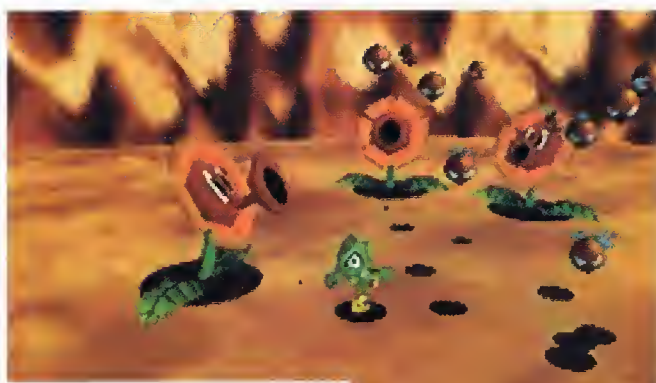
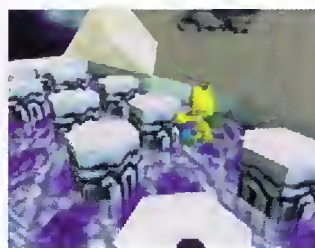
CHAMELEON 2
 ■ **FORMAT:** N64
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** SUNSOFT
 ■ **PUBLISHER:** SUNSOFT
 ■ **PLAYERS:** 1
 ■ **ON SALE IN UK:** SPRING 1999

You can spot an N64 platformer a mile off, if only because of the garish colours, happy Japanese-style music and general air of insanity. *Chameleon Twist 2* is a strict platform game in the old-skool style, with the emphasis on staying alive while negotiating plenty of platforms, timed jumps and goodness knows what else. The twist is that you are a chameleon and you have a tongue – a long, flexible, versatile tongue that you can put to all sorts of uses. You can use it to swing from poles, to suck on to walls and to fling you high in the air in the manner of a pole-vaulter.

We've had a quick whizz over a pre-production copy, and while the

tongue aspect brought a smile to our faces, we had cause to frown for two reasons. Our first eyebrow was lowered when we noticed that, although three dimensional, the whole game is played from a forced perspective requiring you to run and jump at some very specific angles. So you might have to cross a bridge by running left but ever so slightly out of the screen, or have to jump on to a platform into the screen but slightly to the right. The odd angles at which we had to push the analogue joystick proved annoying, and it's a problem that could have been avoided by making the camera rotatable. A second eyebrow quivered ever so slightly because of the number of leaps of faith that the game required – your progression is very much a case of remembering where you died last time round, and not doing it again.

Chameleon Twist 2 looks like it's got potential though and, beyond a few initial niggles, it may well provide some fantastically amusing gameplay. Our eyebrows return to their normal position as we await the finished version.



■ *Chameleon Twist 2* – the only time it's okay to stick your tongue out in public.

RARELY BEFORE HAVE WE FELT SO UNDER THREAT IN A VIDEOGAME

torsos collapse into a pool of their own fluorescent blood.

Despite this fire power, rarely before have we felt quite so under threat before in a videogame. Other first-person shooters have ugly baddies, but most of them appear in front of you giving you at least a fair chance to aim your bazooka or scarper pronto. Not so in *Aliens Vs Predator*. Just like in the films, the Aliens run all over the walls and ceilings, move like the clappers and attack from all angles.

We couldn't work out whether it was best to play it safe and try to pick

them off from a distance, or just dive in with guns blazing and hope for the best. Both ways got us slaughtered. So the answer would seem to combine both stealth and speed.

Switching demo disks, there was just time to have a quick go as the Predator. We found playing as the Invisible One to be less frantic, but as we engaged our invisibility cloak and ripped the Aliens to shreds with our wrist blade, it was pleasingly just as bloody, atmospheric and nightmarish.

If the demos are anything to go by then *Aliens Vs Predator* looks like it is going to be a stonker of a game, implementing familiar sci-fi faces into a first-person blaster with a superb 3D engine, and really giving you a reason to hate and to kill. Your nightmares start here.



FACT FILE

ALIENS VS PREDATOR
 ■ **FORMAT:** 7PC
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** FOX INTERACTIVE
 ■ **PUBLISHER:** FOX INTERACTIVE
 ■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2
 ■ **ON SALE IN UK:** SPRING 1999

Games Insider

Four gaming experts. Their mission: to bring you a unique gaming perspective, each month, in five hundred words or so. It's a tough job. But...



TURNING JAPANESE

Jason Brookes

Sega's dream becomes reality in Tokyo. Our man in Japan joined the queues.

So there I was. I'd set the alarm clock especially early, hopped on the JR Line and by 8.30am on 27 November I was outside an electronics store in the bustling Shinjuku district of Tokyo. One of those Dreamcasts was as good as mine.

There was little evidence of sleeping bags, camping cookers or, thankfully, Metal Gear-style night vision goggles in the small queue. Just 20-or-so regular punters huddled along a wall, and that was it. So much for me taking on the collective might of Japan's hardcore gamers. Where was the hustle and hysteria we'd come to expect from a big hardware launch in Japan? What would my editor say when I turned in a few boring snaps of an orderly queue? I needed drama.

More than a little hyper on the three cans of hi-caffeine coffee I'd necked on the train journey, I considered the implications of a little pushing and shoving – just for research purposes, you understand. I figured that if I pushed-in further up, and then tried to squeeze my way to the front, someone was bound to get shirty. With a bit of luck I might start a small ruckus. Good for photos I reckoned.

Within seconds my head was swimming with images of a full-scale Tokyo street brawl; complete with rioting, looting and Sega president Shoichiro Irimajiri cowering behind a stack of Dreamcast boxes. I also envisaged a hapless English journo getting his head kicked in by some real-life *Virtua Fighter* experts – at which point I took a deep breath, and realised that I should cut down on my caffeine intake, not to mention *SpikeOut* sessions.

While waiting for the doors to open, excited Sega heads babbled about "Projek Berkree" (*Project Berkeley*, to give Sega's much-hyped adventure game its official moniker), and puzzled pedestrians slowed to

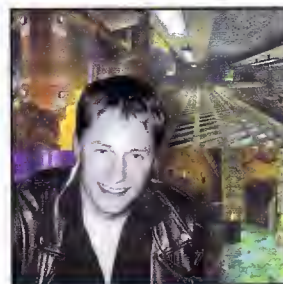
see what they were missing out on. Soon a shop assistant cloaked in a Dreamcast orange Hapi (a traditional Japanese festival jacket) announced through a loudhailer that "100 hundred machines would be made available." Yeah! Call FedEx! But then added that "Purchases would be restricted to one per person". Bugger. There goes my export empire.

Fortunately it wasn't long before my 60,000 Yen (around £330) was rung up on the till and I was walking away with a Dreamcast, VMS, arcade stick and, having snapped up the entire launch software line-up, four new games. Once I was home in front of the telly, however, it didn't take long to realise why so many copies of *Godzilla Generations*, *Pen Pen* and *July* were left on the shelves. As with PlayStation and Saturn, only one game mattered on launch day in Japan. The Saturn had *Virtua Fighter*, the PlayStation *Ridge Racer* and *Virtua Fighter 3tb* was the only reason anyone bought a Dreamcast.

Now call me a jaded old hack, but something's wrong here. Isn't a new console meant to provide new gaming experiences? Is Sega really committed to pushing back the boundaries of videogaming, or does it just want to keep recycling the same ideas? Okay, so *VF3tb* is a top notch conversion – perhaps the best beat-'em-up out there, and certainly the most stunning in visuals terms. But essentially it's just a flashier, re-engineered version of a five-year-old game. Apart from the weirdy new logo on the console, where exactly is the New Sega we've been promised?

Well it's early days. And let's not forget that in the Japanese market re-engineered games are a permanent fixture. Over in the west, Dreamcast's debut will be far more inspiring, and let's hope it's boosted by titles employing the technology for more than just nice backgrounds. In the meantime though, I'm still wondering where the machine's must-have appeal lies for gamers looking to upgrade from N64s and PlayStations? *Sonic Adventure* certainly has a lot to prove. And, once again, Sega's fortune is depending on him.

■ In a past life, Jason was editor of Edge magazine. Now he spends his time in Japan and California.



THIS IS HARDCORE

Julian Rignall

Bubbles. God's gift to great gameplay.

The trouble with being a self-confessed hardcore gamer is the image you've got to live up to. There's the look – stars and stripes bandanna, a pallid complexion interspersed by eruptions of acne, mullet haircut, whatever might be your thing. Then there's the kind of games you're supposed to like – *Quake*, *Street Fighter* and obscure Japanese RPGs. A caffeine-fuelled diet of maiming, dragon punches and hit points. I'll plead guilty to the games-half of the stereotype (I haven't had a mullet since Def Leppard bestrode the world of rock like a Colossus) with one proviso. I am in touch with the pink and fluffy side of my nature. Put simply, I've got a lot of time for cute. Particularly for the long and glorious career of one of gaming's greatest creations – Bub and Bob.

Ever since these two titchy dinosaurs turned up in the original *Bubble Bobble* with the words "Now it is beginning of a fantastic story! Let's make a journey to the cave of monsters! Good luck!", they've starred in some of the finest, most playable games ever made. What's more – and it's got to be said – they've got nowhere near the sort of credit they deserve, or would have got, if Nintendo or Sega rather than Taito had created them.

Of course, if you're new to gaming, you might not have come across their miniature reptilian brand of genius yet. The place to start is with any of the classic *Bubble Bobble* series – *Bubble Bobble*, *Rainbow Islands* and *Parasol Stars*. These 2D, ultra cute platformers have been around long enough to have appeared on the NES, Spectrum and C64, as well as the PlayStation and Saturn, taking in the likes of the ST, Amiga and Turbo Grafx 16 along the way. The basic idea – either trapping a succession of none-more-cute baddies in bubbles and popping them or shooting rainbows or hitting purple pianos with umbrellas – might not sound

like much, but all three titles stand as one of the few retro gaming experiences that aren't a crushing disappointment when you return to play them again now.

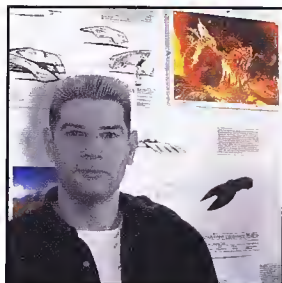
The secret of Bub and Bob's success is easy to define, in that most misused of words – gameplay. A factor that's been very much to the fore in the other half of their CV – the *Puzzle Bobble* games. Known outside of Japan as *Bust-A-Move*, these classics ditch the platforming elements for a surreal game of bubble-bursting puzzle perfection. Best played against a human opponent, you get a half a screen each, a launcher (a catapult like contraption) and an infinite supply of different-coloured bubbles. Shoot 'em at the ever descending mass of balloons at the top of the screen with the basic aim being to match three of the same colour so they pop. Again, it doesn't sound like one of gaming's greatest moments but I'd make a convincing case for *Bust-A-Move* being the new chess. Except it's not boring.

Underneath the whole colourful party vibe, the insanelly dinky characters and plinky-plonky soundtrack, lies a game that's both frighteningly addictive and superbly strategic. Played against a fellow human, it's one of the best videogame experiences know to mankind and easily as competitive as *Tekken* or *Virtua Fighter*, but with none of the unseemly face punching. You soon learn to bounce your bubbles off the wall and hang strings of bubbles off ones you're going to pop to increase the deluge on the other side of the screen. Like in *Tetris* – the only other puzzle game in the same super addictive league – you'll be formulating complex strategies that hinge on the appearance of a single particularly bubble. Which never comes.

The great thing is, absolutely anyone can play it from the moment you put the pad in their hands. And that includes your dear old Mum. If gaming's ever going to break out of its self imposed ghetto and become just another form of entertainment that cuts right across the age and gender barrier, it'll be down to games like this. *Bust A Move* (and I recommend *Bust A Move 2* on PlayStation, N64 and PC as the classic version) is simple, easy to understand and, something that often gets overlooked in these days of increasingly sophisticated machine specs and polygon counting, damn good fun to play.

So, whether you're a jaded old hack like myself, a hardcore game fan or someone who just got a PlayStation for Christmas, you owe it to yourself to sample some of Bub and Bob's magical gaming genius.

■ **Julian is editor-in-chief of the Imagine Games Network (<http://www.ign.com/>). Where he writes about games.**



BACKSCREEN

Neil Jackson

Sex, lies and videogames. All in a day's work.

Everyone thinks that games get designed in seedy restaurants on the backs of paper napkins. At tables surrounded by dancing-girls, and replete with plenty of booze and recreational nasal substances. Oh, I wish.

I admit I once did a deal in the very Chicago restaurant where the Blues Brothers asked "How much for your wife?" But I've been wine and dined in a Little Chef far more often than I've had hot dinners.

Despite the consistently disappointing normality of games design, very often the best concepts do come in a lightning flash of inspiration at three in the morning. It's a question of remembering, or writing it all down at the time, then reconsidering it in sobriety and the cold light of day. That's when it crystallises either into a potential million-dollar design document or so much extra toilet paper.

The gameplay is the key – it's like the character-play in a movie. Without it, your game is just a pointless sequence of images and sounds. Your players need to be entertained, stretched, pushed, tortured and rewarded; sometimes all at once. But they also need to be convinced it's worth going through that hell – that there's actually a point to their struggles, and that the journey is going to be fun. How you feed out the story and plot, and how you make any edge-of-the-seat action relevant, are at the core of a good design – far more so than a list of technical tricks and neat graphic effects. It's not just what the player is doing, it's why they're doing it – that's the important bit.

Forcing your player to suspend disbelief and buy into your concept is crucial, exactly as it is in all other forms of dramatic entertainment. To do this, players need to know (or need to think they know) what they should do, even if they don't exactly know how best to do it yet. They need to have the right "stakes" – the

stuff they'll lose if they fail. These stakes need to be pitched just right – they have to be worth having, but not so crucial that losing them dashes all hope. Losing a few points or a bags of gold (especially when they're about as hard to get as dodgy acid), is not fulfilling, taxing or even remotely "emotionally involving", as the marketing folk love to say.

And it's the marketing folk that you ultimately have to sell your game to, assuming you make it past the initial "meet producers, explain broad concept" meeting. You'll have to prepare a far more detailed presentation for the marketing team – and that team may have the final say as to whether your design is picked from many for production.

As you'd expect, this is the difficult part. Despite their closeness to the biz, many marketing teams don't appear to have the insight or the "gamer roots" to catch on to your big idea. This isn't really a criticism – the marketers know their part of the biz best, and sometimes they deliberately play dumb to see how well your idea sells itself. They need to know they have a reasonable chance at getting it across in a 20-second commercial or a magazine ad.

Armed with this background to the machinations of marketing types, the framework of a developer's sales job is almost done. A buzzphrase to remember is "unique selling points", or USPs – the things your game have that make it stand out from the crowd. A separate document with ten catchy phrases, each followed by ten short explanations, may be enough to give the marketers an angle on your design – and you a chance of making it to the all-important next meeting.

There's obviously a lot more to designing a game than having a few bright ideas and writing your sales pitch – but I'll leave that 'til next time. In the meantime, if you've got any questions that you think everyone deserves an answer to, drop me a line at backscreen@techno.demon.co.uk and if I can, I'll answer them for you here.

■ **Neil makes games for a living at Binary Asylum. His current project is Star Trek: New Worlds.**



AMERICAN EXPRESS

Simon Cox

American football. Those crazy yanks are Madden for it..

It is December. I am standing in goal, talking to my mate Grant. I should be defending the goal, but instead I'm moaning about the weather (Grant claims he's found a robin frozen upside down in the tree behind the gym) and ruminating on the undoubtedly iffy sexuality of the games teacher, who during last week's rugby game allegedly grabbed more than just fat-kid Tony's shirt in the scrum. Suddenly, out of nowhere, the ball appears – fired like a missile at the goal. It doesn't get there, though, because something blocks it. My face. As the ringing in my ears grows louder I can just make out the distant shout: "Nice save, Coxy you twonk..." Yeah, cheers.

And that was soccer for me at school. Essentially something to be avoided at all costs until I was old enough to be sporty by watching it on telly, where there was no danger of anything knocking my front teeth out or kicking my shin in just the right place, crippling me enough to force me into goal. So it's a bit ironic that I'm now living in the most sport-obsessed nation on the planet – a fact reflected in the videogames market.

America is about nothing if not competition and videogames provide another avenue for beer-swilling, Pringles-popping, burger-munching, telly-tubbies to actually win at something without breaking a sweat (unless you count those critical minutes that prelude the pizza delivery). Americans spend great wodge of cash on sports games every year and most of that money goes to Electronic Arts, erstwhile maker of *FIFA* and about ten other sports games series, designed primarily for the US market. The king of them all (and EA's top money spinner) is its *John Madden/NFL American football* franchise.

John Madden's name is the most valuable in the videogame sporting arena. Put his grinning

"everyone's uncle" mug on the front of the box and American gamers and, crucially, non-gamers, pony up the dough for what is, by most estimates, a pretty average gaming experience. *Madden Football* made its name back in 1990 when Sega's Mega Drive took off. Indeed, Sega executives will freely admit that without Uncle John paving the way, the *Sonic* phenomenon would've been far less, well... phenomenal. Since then the quality of the games has slipped, but that *Madden* name still keeps the profits churning in.

So what is it about this Madden bloke and his football game that seems to make for such huge appeal?

Madden himself was once an American Football star. In common with Jimmy Hill, he took up the art of commentary, and has become the Stateside voice of American Football. Unlike Jimmy Hill, though, everyone here likes him and no-one wants to (ahem) chin him. To millions of fans John Madden represents the Sunday afternoon ritual of watching football in front of the TV with your mates. He's old enough to know what he's talking about and macho enough to be worshipped by the likes of construction workers, cops and cowboys. He's acceptable – which makes the games, in turn, acceptable to a much wider audience than a sports game would normally find. Madden is the anti-geek.

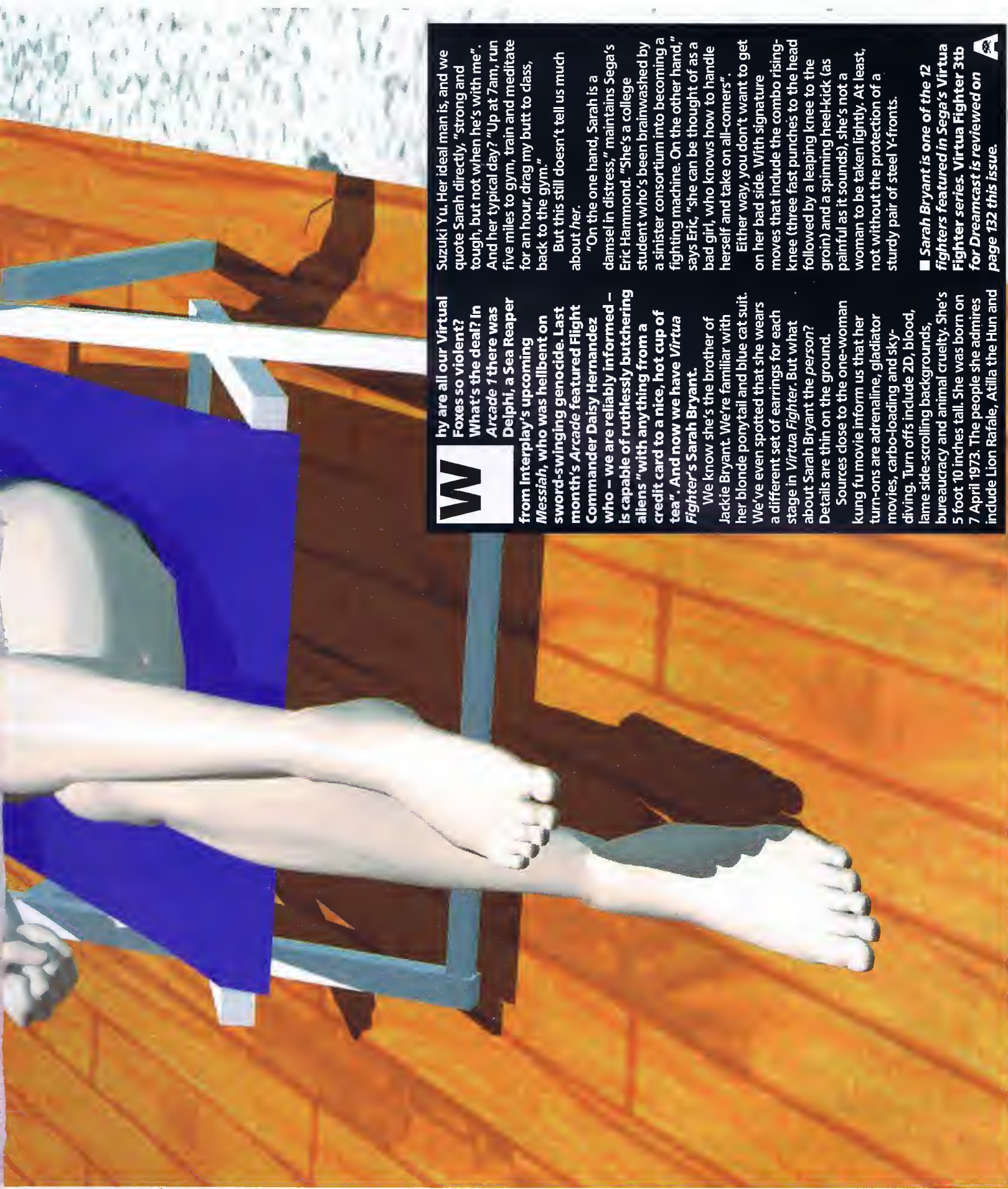
Electronic Arts has also been clever in its presentation. Instead of just coming up with a bunch of menus and buttons, it has worked hard to faithfully recreate the graphics seen on TV, including tons of video clips of old-man Madden and deceptively simple options. An idiot could play *Madden* without ever previously having played another videogame – and last year, over a million people in the US did. John Madden is sport – and sport is close to every American heart – which is why it would never work in the UK. Would you buy a game purely on the basis of it having a picture of Jimmy Hill on the box? Precisely. Well, maybe if it was a beat-'em up...

■ **Simon is executive editor of San Francisco's Next Generation magazine.**

Virtually perfect

Sarah Bryant, star of Sega's Virtua Fighter series, is just an ordinary college student. Who admires Atilla the Hun. And routinely knees sumo wrestlers in the lunchbox.





Why are all our Virtual Foxes so violent? What's the deal? In *Arcade 1* there was

Delphi, a Sea Reaper from Interplay's upcoming *Messiah*, who was hellbent on

sword-swinging genocide. Last month's *Arcade* featured Flight

Commander Daisy Hernandez

who — we are reliably informed —

is capable of ruthlessly butchering

aliens "with anything from a

credit card to a nice, hot cup of

tea". And now we have *Virtua*

Fighter's Sarah Bryant.

We know she's the brother of

Jackie Bryant. We're familiar with

her blonde ponytail and blue cat suit.

We've even spotted that she wears

a different set of earrings for each

stage in *Virtua Fighter*. But what

about Sarah Bryant the person?

Details are thin on the ground.

Sources close to the one-woman

kung fu movie inform us that her

turn-ons are adrenaline, gladiator

movies, carbo-loading and sky-

diving. Turn offs include 2D, blood,

lame side-scrolling backgrounds,

bureaucracy and animal cruelty. She's

5 foot 10 inches tall. She was born on

7 April 1973. The people she admires

include Lion Rafale, Atilla the Hun and

Suzuki Yu. Her ideal man is, and we quote Sarah directly, "strong and tough, but not when he's with me".

And her typical day? "Up at 7am, run

five miles to gym, train and meditate

for an hour, drag my butt to class,

back to the gym."

But this still doesn't tell us much

about her.

"On the one hand, Sarah is a

damsel in distress," maintains Sega's

Eric Hammond. "She's a college

student who's been brainwashed by

a sinister consortium into becoming a

fighting machine. On the other hand,"

says Eric, "she can be thought of as a

bad girl, who knows how to handle

herself and take on all-comers".

Either way, you don't want to get

on her bad side. With signature

moves that include the combo rising-

knee (three fast punches to the head

followed by a leaping knee to the

groin) and a spinning heel-kick (as

painful as it sounds), she's not a

woman to be taken lightly. At least,

not without the protection of a

sturdy pair of steel Y-fronts.

■ Sarah Bryant is one of the 12 fighters featured in Sega's *Virtua Fighter* series. *Virtua Fighter 3tb* for Dreamcast is reviewed on page 132 this issue.





"Let's get this straight right from the start. Playing videogame football is nothing like the real thing."

Alan Shearer, on why his job his safe

Interview by | Sam Richards

Alan Shearer

He may be a deadly predator on the pitch, but at home the England captain prefers a nice game of **Croc** with his kids. And there's nothing wrong with that

Alan Shearer is the consummate striker. He scored a hat trick on his debut for Southampton, became the first player to notch up 100 premierships goals while at Blackburn Rovers and then smashed through the UK transfer record moving to Newcastle United for £15 million. Now 28, Shearer is the England captain and is notable as being one of the most feared and respected footballers in the world.

But enough of the known facts, we've got more important questions to ask, like does Alan Shearer play videogames? If so, is he any good at them? And what are his reasons for endorsing Gremlin's *Actua Soccer* for PC and PlayStation?

We know about Alan Shearer the footballer, but what about Alan Shearer the videogame player? Do you live a secret life in front of the flickering screen?

I wouldn't say it's like that! But I do have a PlayStation at home and I do play *Actua Soccer*. It's my face on the box, so I'm proud to say it's a really good game.

What was it impressed you about the game when you first saw it?

Well let's get this straight from the start – playing videogame football is nothing like the real thing and can never hope to be. But people want to get as close to that experience as possible and the realism in football games these days allows them to do that. In *Actua Soccer* the grounds and kits are all accurate, you can choose different weather conditions and the tactics are the same as in the real sport, so that keeps you going, even before you start playing the game.

Do you fancy yourself as a bit of a demon on the virtual pitch?

To be honest, I'm still getting to grips with the new version of the game. I'm quite a slow learner and it's taken me ages to reach a decent standard on *Actua Soccer 2* – now they go and bring a new one out! The kids, who are aged six and four, beat me all the time.

Do you become the competitive Dad, trying to emulate your kids' PlayStation prowess?

No, I think I get rid of all that on the pitch. Plus the kids are too good. I play against them in *Buggy* – the one with the radio-controlled cars – and they usually win. They also like *Croc*. I think the PlayStation is a healthy thing, as long as they're not playing it every hour of the day.

You're a pretty keen golfer, so have you been attracted by any of the golf games around at the moment?

When I can get the kids off the machine, I find myself playing *Actua Golf* all the time. Although I haven't yet become addicted to the point where I'm staying up all night, I do hear Peter Alliss telling me I've gone into a bunker in my sleep.

When travelling with Newcastle and England, there must be loads of waiting around in hotels. Do games consoles make regular appearances?

Increasingly, yeah, you see them all the time. I don't always get involved myself, but there were a lot of videogames being played during the World Cup. David Batty's always up for a game, Rob Lee, Warren Barton, Keith Gillespie... when that lot get together, it's serious.

OK, so you approve of *Actua Soccer*. Like you say, your face is on the box. But what would you include if you were designing your own game?

I think that the games these days have got it cracked. But I suppose I would like to see more goals, and from a wider variety of shooting angles. The realistic management options are always a good idea, because everyone thinks they're a manager, don't they?

As realistic as videogames become, it's obviously impossible to recreate the pressure of expectation which players and managers deal with. How do you cope with the pressure?

I think you learn to value your position. We are being paid large amounts of money for doing something we love and there's not many people in the world who can say that. We're very fortunate, so there are pressures and expectations which we have to accept and respect. Although I do think it's wrong when a manager is sacked at the first sign of trouble. It's easy to blame the manager because he can be sacked and the

O'ref!

■ When I met Alan Shearer, he was making an appearance at a gaming tournament to promote *Actua Soccer 3*. Thirty two journalists took part in the footy competition, held over BT's on-line gaming network, Wireplay. Your humble correspondent put in a sterling display in the yellow and green of Norwich City, but four points from three games was not quite enough to head to the second round.

Shearer himself didn't take part as he had to leave, probably to meet with another lucrative endorsee. However, competing alongside the hacks were two more footballers; Gus Hurdle, correspondent for *Arcade's* sister mag *Total Football* and turning out for Basingstoke in the Rymans League; and one of English football's brightest prospects, 20-year-old Sunderland striker Michael Bridges.

In a fairy tale end game, the two real footballers beat off all other competition to face each other in the final – eventually won by Gus Hurdle (playing as France) 2-1. Michael Bridges evidently didn't let this defeat affect his real game – two days later he put away two goals in Sunderland's 4-0 demolition of Sheffield United.

players can't. Clubs should stick with their manager through good times and bad, at least until the end of a season.

Since the World Cup, the England set-up has suffered criticisms, some from within. What's your view?

As far I'm concerned, we simply haven't played well and if you perform poorly, you're going to get criticised. People are going to try to find all kinds of reasons for it, but if you don't play well, you don't play well. When things don't go right, you have to work extremely hard to make them right and that's what we're doing at the moment.

Will we qualify for Euro 2000?

I have no doubt about that. I honestly think we'll win all our remaining games and finish top of the group.


How has the responsibility of the England captaincy affected you?

Hopefully, it hasn't at all. I must have been doing something right in the first place to be given the job, so I've tried not to change my approach.

Is the fact that you're England captain always at the back of your mind when you're trying to relax?

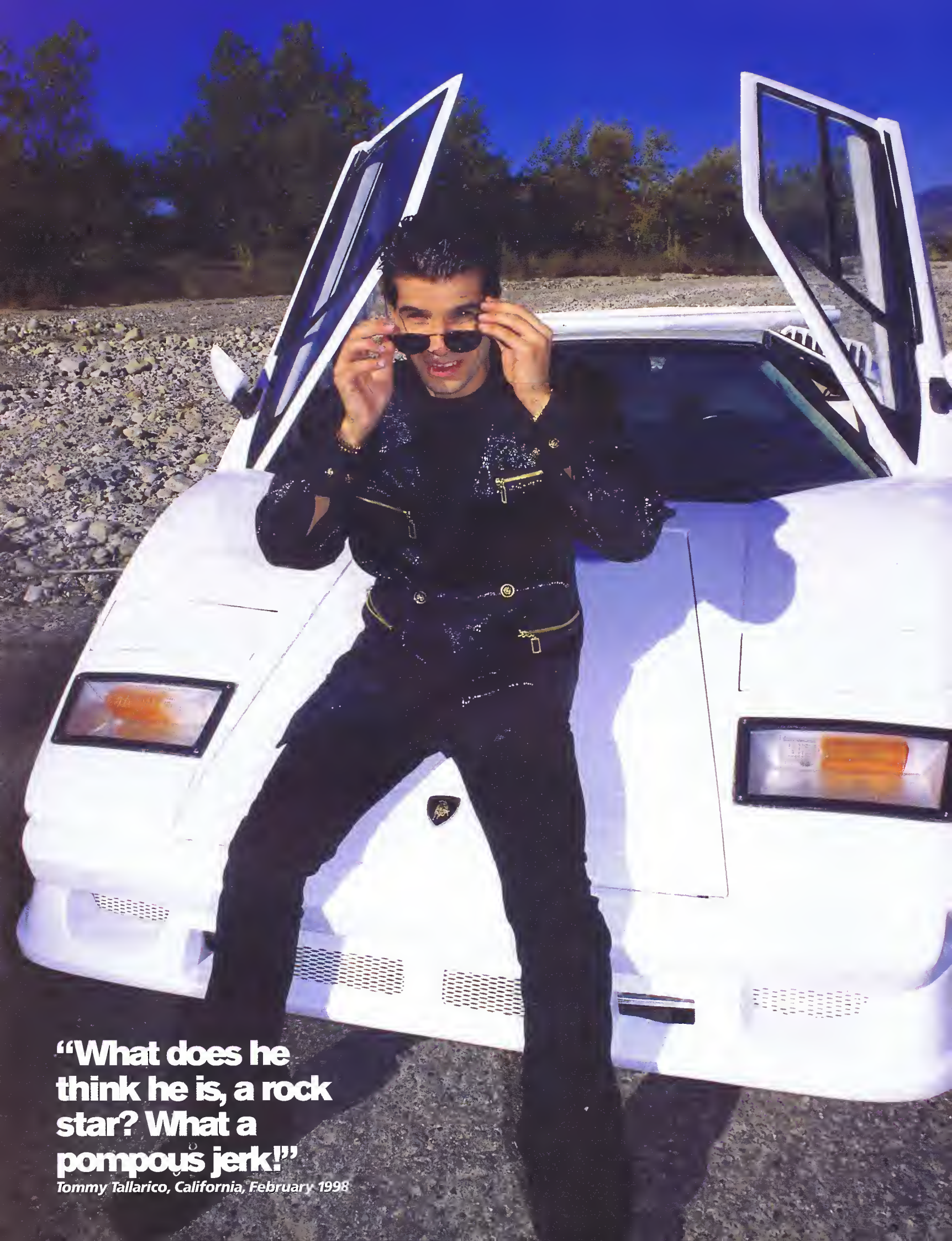
I think about it like this – I've got two little girls and they're not really interested in how many goals I score, they're only interested in their Dad, so I'm always occupied trying to think of ways to entertain them.

Off the pitch, you've always been portrayed as Boring Alan Shearer. How does that affect you?

Well people only see me on television, so there's a side to me that the public don't know. When I go for a drink with the lads, I probably come across differently to how I appear on television. If I'm always asked the same questions, then I'm not going to have anything new to say! But I'll continue to do things my way – it hasn't done me much harm so far. 

■ Gremlin Interactive's *Actua Soccer 3* is on sale now.

PHOTOGRAPH: ALLSPORT



**"What does he
think he is, a rock
star? What a
pompous jerk!"**

Tommy Tallarico, California, February 1998

Interview by | Neil West

Tommy Tallarico

He's the world's most successful videogame musician. He lives in sunny southern California and earns over \$1 million a year. The bastard.

He writes the songs. You know, the ones that play in the background while you zap aliens, score winning goals or plot to take over the world. And he's very good at it. Having driven from Springfield, Massachusetts (that's one corner of the USA) to Hollywood, California (that's the other) at age 21, "to try and be a musician," he ended up selling keyboards in a store near Disneyland. On his first day he met a videogame producer from Virgin, talked his way into a job as a tester and started working his way up.

Now he runs his own company, "Tommy Tallarico Studios, Inc", and is famous for attending videogame trade shows in a gold "Liberace" jacket with an attendant posse of bodyguards and scantily clad models. Let's try and find out why...

How many games have you written music for?

I actually have all of the boxes for every game I've ever done right here in my studio, so let me see... 104! Together, they've sold over 25 million copies.

What was your first?

My first score was for *Prince of Persia* on the Game Boy, but that was just a bunch of bleeps and blips. The first game I really got a chance to write music for that could sound cool was Virgin's *Global Gladiators* for the Genesis – that's the Sega Mega Drive in the UK, right?

What are you most proud of?

I would have to say the *Earthworm Jim* projects were my favourites. Creating and recording all of the crazy dialogue and sound effects was really fun. Working with the great David Perry also brings a positive spin on everything.

Where did you study music?

My teachers were Beethoven, Eddie Van Halen, Elvis – see, that's who I listen to. I never took lessons, never had formal training, I just play by ear.

Do you do just music, or sound effects too?

We do the whole package for sure! Creating the music is sometimes the easiest part. Creating the ambiance is what really draws the player into the game. You could have a great music score and crap sound effects and it will really ruin the experience.

So how do you work?

The best thing for me is to just play the game with no sound and wait for stuff to start coming to me. Then I go into my studio, which is upstairs, and figure out the notes on the keyboard that were dancing around in my head seconds before. Sometimes people come to me with a very complete style in mind, and say stuff like: "Can we have the rhythm section of The Prodigy, the sounds of The Chemical Brothers, the feel of Nine Inch Nails, oh yeah, and the guitar sound of Waylon Jennings?" Most of the time, though, they just give me the project and say: "Do what you think is best."

How much does in-game music affect a player's enjoyment?

I truly believe it is 25% of the gaming experience. Audio can set a mood, accent a motion and pretty much set the emotion for an level. I'll give you an example. You could have a scene where a character runs up to a huge diff and slowly looks over it to reveal miles and miles of scenery. Depending on what the audio is doing, the player will react in different ways. If the music is haunting or scary, it may seem like you're getting chased or that you're going to fall. If the music's beautiful and epic it will give you a sense of awe and accomplishment.

What if the music's good ol' country and western?

Then you'll want to turn the game off and shoot yourself in the head.

What's with the gold jacket you wear to videogame shows?

OK, let's put this puppy to rest, 'cos there seems to be a lot of confusion about this. A lot of jealous, idiotic, knob-scratching, Jawa-turd eating, tit-headed, wankers love to say: "Oh, what does he think he is, a rock-star or something? What a pompous jerk!"

The reality is that I was sick of walking around trade shows seeing only suits or badly dressed nerds. There was

Play that funky music

■ You probably own a game featuring the music of Mr Tallarico. His PlayStation credits include: *Agile Warrior*, *Apocalypse*, *Beavis & Butthead Mini-Golf*, *Black Dawn*, *Burning Road*, *Covert Wars*, *Earthworm Jim 2*, *Felix the Cat*, *Golden Nugget*, *Hardball 99*, *James Bond: Tomorrow Never Dies*, *Major Damage*, *MDK*, *Messiah*, *NHL Face-Off 98*, *Pac-Man 3-D*, *Powerslave*, *Skeleton Warriors*, *Spot Goes To Hollywood*, *Stunt Copter*, *Tales of Destiny*, *Test Drive 4*, *Test Drive 5*, *Test Drive: Off-Road 2*, *Treasures of the Deep*, *VMX Racing*, *Wargames* and *Wild 95*.

PC games featuring Tommy's tunes include: *Adrenix*, *Agile Warrior*, *Akolyte*, *Beavis & Butthead*, *Duckman: Legend of the Fall*, *Earthworm Jim 1 and 2*, *Flying Tigers*, *Golden Nugget*, *Hardball 6*, *Hyper 3-D Pinball*, *MDK*, *Messiah*, *Monopoly Deluxe*, *Necessary Evil*, *Powerslave*, *Redline*, *Shuttle*, *Test Drive 4*, *Test Drive 5*, *Ultra Fighters* and *Wargames*. Not even Saturn owners are safe with credits including: *Black Dawn*, *Earthworm Jim 2*, *Golden Nugget*, *Hyper 3-D Pinball*, *Mortal Kombat Trilogy*, *Powerslave*, *Rampage*, *Skeleton Warriors*, *Spot Goes To Hollywood* and *VMX Racing*. He's a busy man.

no personality, no shock-factor, no: "Oh my god! Did you see that?" Nobody knew who anybody was. Your favourite game could have been *7th Guest* and you could have been standing right next to Graeme Divine or Rob Landeros and have no clue who they were.

So it's about being a personality?

I'd like to see more images and personalities from the videogames industry – like Hollywood. People go see movies just because of the actor. I believe gamers would like to know who created their favourite games and what their next project is going to be. I know I want to play the next game by the *Metal Gear Solid* team. But who are they? I dunno.

So the bodyguards and throng of scantily clad babes that accompany you in the gold jacket...

...they're there because I think I'm a rock star or something! Oh yeah, and I'm a pompous jerk!

How much do you get paid?

I hate it when people say: "no comment," so I'll tell you. Usually between \$75,000 and \$100,000 per project. If it's only sound effects, between \$15,000 and \$30,000. As far as music goes, I charge by the minute. It's usually around \$1,200 a minute. \$1,500 a minute for synched music and effects. I also keep part ownership, and must have the company logo displayed in as many obnoxious places as possible. Tommy Tallarico Studios, Inc is the largest multimedia post-production house on the planet and will hopefully remain that way until the fat little Italian plumber sings.

What's the secret of your success?

I'm a musician first, not a programmer, and I love playing videogames! The most discouraging thing is seeing people in the industry who don't play games – and trust me, there's a lot more than you would think. I can honestly say that out of about the 100-or-so musicians in the industry who do what I do, I'm the only hardcore gamer. I swear! It sucks, but it's true!

PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK KOEHLER



THE TOP 50 MOST PAINFUL GAMING MOMENTS

WORDS BY JONATHAN DAVIES





Game characters were born to suffer. But the best games hurt you as much as they hurt your on-screen pal. Scientific as always, we've measured the pain and compiled a chart. Prepare to wince, flinch and possibly cry.



NINTENDO 64

50. An arrowing sight

■ Publisher: **Acclaim**

■ Is that a crossbow bolt sticking into the chest of that monkey from *Turok 2*? And, even worse, out the other side again?



NINTENDO 64

49. Bum deal

■ Publisher: **Konami**

■ Ooh, this isn't what we want to see, particularly after a large cooked breakfast. Put it away, Mamezo out of *Rakuga Kids*.

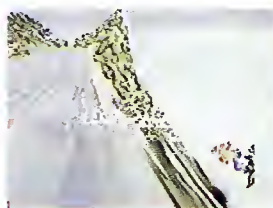


PLAYSTATION

48. Mined out

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive**

■ One wrong step and *Abe's Oddysey* is over – it's quite literally a minefield out there.



PLAYSTATION

47. Snow laughing matter

■ Publisher: **SCEE**

■ When a stunt goes right in *Cool Boarders 2* it's a beautiful thing to behold. When it goes wrong, though, it's best to look away.



PLAYSTATION PC

46. Gone to pot

■ Publisher: **Gremlin Interactive**

■ Even the most sporting player, the best of losers, will struggle to suppress a grimace upon being forced to watch his opponent clear the table in *Pool Shark*.



PLAYSTATION

45. Farewell family jewels

■ Publisher: **BMG Interactive**

■ It's enough to make you wonder why chaps' bikes (as featured in *Courier Crisis*) have crossbars and ladies' don't, rather than – as seems more logical – the other way round.



PLAYSTATION PC

NINTENDO 64

44. Leg go!

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive**

■ Being battered to death is bad enough. But being battered to death with the soggy end of your own ripped-off leg in *Mortal Kombat 4* is frankly insulting.

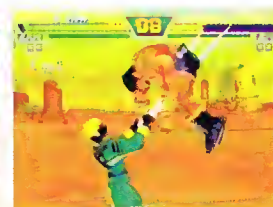


NINTENDO 64

43. Sweat, sweat, sweat

■ Publisher: **Acclaim**

■ None of *WWF Warzone* is rehearsed, you know. For a start, who'd agree to this particularly intimate hold by Goldust? Or even go within 100 yards of the Spandex-clad deviant?



NINTENDO 64

42. Hole story

■ Publisher: **Virgin**

■ Does your tummy button look bigger than it used to? Then you may have fallen victim to Dr Dark's fist-mounted spikes in *Street Fighter EX Alpha*



PLAYSTATION

41. Burns Night

■ Publisher: **Acclaim**

The curious thing about the flaming dragon punch in *Street Fighter: The Movie* is that it looks almost as painful for Ken as it does for Zangief.



PLAYSTATION

40. Shocking truth

■ Publisher: **Virgin**

This moment from *Star Gladiator* looks almost pretty, doesn't it? But there'll be nothing pretty about the aftermath of the lightning bolt that June has just discharged into the midriff of, er... June.



PC

39. Plane tiff

■ Publisher: **Microsoft**

■ What a super feeling it is to soar through the clouds in a Spitfire, courtesy of *Microsoft Combat Flight Simulator*! And how rotten to be ambushed by Jerry and sent plummeting like a stone to a messy encounter with Blighty.



PC

38. Self-flagellation

■ Publisher: **Microids**

■ Weapons don't come much more potent than *Shogo's* Bullgut. And pain doesn't get much more intense than accidentally firing off the Bullgut while standing too close to something. So don't do it.



NINTENDO 64 PC

37. Dinner-saur

■ Publisher: **Acclaim**

■ Here *Turok* is being swallowed whole by a tyrannosaurus rex. This hurts more than being bitten by a rottweiler and yet, astonishingly, keeping a t-rex not illegal in Britain.

THE TOP 50 MOST PAINFUL GAMING MOMENTS



PLAYSTATION

36. Came, sword, conked out

■ Publisher: SCE

■ Equip every character in a game with a sword and it's clearly all going to end in tears. *Bushido Blade* is the kind of game that has the Blood Transfusion Service working double shifts.

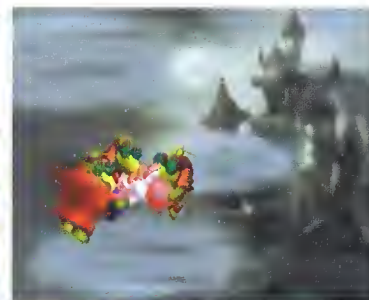


NINTENDO 64 PC

35. Water way to go

■ Publisher: Infogrames

■ You know how in Tetris on the Game Boy, if the blocks reach to the top of the screen you screw up your eyes, hold the GB at arms' length and go "Gnnergh"? Suffering an earthquake in *Wetrax* is like that, only worse.



NINTENDO 64

34. A life cut short

■ Publisher: Nintendo

■ *Yoshi's Story* isn't the toughest of games, so losing a Yoshi is a rare occurrence. Which makes it all the more deeply affecting to see our fallen friend carried off by Koopa's dastardly men to their castle among the clouds. A quiver of the lower lip is perfectly acceptable on such occasions, along with a slight reddening of the eyes.



NINTENDO 64

29. Vertebral take-off

■ Publisher: GT Interactive

■ For a bit more good, old-fashioned sado-masochism we turn again to the *Mortal Kombat* series. Here, in number 4, Lui Kang has taken it upon himself to grab Tanya by the hair and plant his foot firmly in her back, snapping her spine like a cheese straw. Scarcely the act of a gentleman.



PLAYSTATION PC

28. Tarra Lara

■ Publisher: EIDOS

■ Oh, Lara. Why couldn't you have worn something a bit more sensible? A bullet-proof vest or something? Why did you have to listen to those marketing men? A Lycra bra's all very well for selling copies of *Tomb Raider III*, but it's not much good against an automatic gun turret, is it?



PC

27. Rancor file

■ Publisher: Virgin

■ In all the *Star Wars* games that've appeared over the years, nothing is more painful than having your head bitten off by the Rancor in *Jedi Knight: Mysteries of the Sith*. History could have turned out very differently if the same thing had happened to Luke in *Return of the Jedi*.



PC

26. V. bad

■ Publisher: Grolier Interactive Entertainment

■ Say what you like about David Braben, he knows how to make a ship explode. It's difficult not to wince as your *V2000* craft takes its final hit and smacks into the ground, instantly becoming a giant ball of flame and sending clods of earth flying dozens of feet into the air.



PLAYSTATION

21. Tummy ache

■ Publisher: SCE

■ The beauty of *Tekken 2* is that you don't have to be a ponce to wince along with the characters as they duff each other up. Particular sympathy must here go to Jun, whose white socks aren't enough to save him from Paul Phoenix's fist to the stomach.



PC

20. Eight, nine, ten...

■ Publisher: Empire

■ While playing real-life golf is patently absurd, there's something soothing about its computer reproduction. A round of *The Golf Pro*, for example is most pleasant until your ball gets stuck in the rough. Then you can't even bend your club around the caddy's neck to relief the frustration.



PLAYSTATION

19. Wheel of ill fortune

■ Publisher: BMG Interactive

■ Just the word "sawmill" is enough to send shudders down the spine. But one of scariest of said wood-cutting installations is this one in *Pandemonium*, with those spinning teeth just as nasty as they look. Or possibly slightly nastier.



PLAYSTATION

18. Bye bike

■ Publisher: Electronic Arts

■ Ask any motorcyclist if he's ever fallen off and he'll spin you a gruesome saga of scabby knees, leathers torn right through to the skin and metal pins screwed into bone. Have pity, then, for this contender from *Road Rash*, who's about to leave a lengthy crimson streak along Her Majesty's highway.



NINTENDO 64

33. Vic's frying pan

■ Publisher: **Atlas**

■ It's probably supposed to be a giant golden coin, or something. But the wince-making noise that accompanies *Snowboard Kids*' squash-the-other-players power-up is exactly the same as the sound Vic's frying pan makes when he hits Bob over the head with it in *Shooting Stars*.



NINTENDO 64

32. Falling foul

■ Publisher: **Nintendo**

■ Can you feel a slimy, throbbing thing in your mouth? (No, not you, missus.) That'll be your heart, forced up and into your trachea as you crashed over the side of the track in *F-Zero X* and plunged tens of thousands of feet into lonely nothingness.



PC

31. Getting the third degree

■ Publisher: **Sierra**

■ So they knew how to build things in those days, did they? Not according to *Grand Prix Legends*. The slightest brush with another car and your driver's engulfed by a ball of flame. You can almost hear the plastic surgeons snapping on their latex gloves.



NINTENDO 64

30. Head case

■ Publisher: **Nintendo/Rare**

■ Stand still to admire the view in *Banjo-Kazooie* and you'll be treated to the gruesome spectacle of Banjo's feathered friend pecking him in the head. Judging by the resulting hollow sound, he's gone right through the fur and skin and is hammering away at exposed cranium. Ick.



PC

25. Toe sandwich

■ Publisher: **Sega**

■ When a game includes a character called Jeffry you hardly enter into it fearing for your life. But *Virtua Fighter 2* is actually one of the most eye-watering games there is, particularly if your face happens to become involved in Jacky's roundhouse kick. And what if he just trod on something "squidgy"?



NINTENDO 64 PC

24. Four times the hurt

■ Publisher: **Activision**

■ When pain-transmitting joysticks finally appear in the shops, there's one "moment" that'll see them withdrawn from the shops immediately: the quad-damage gibbing from *Quake II*. Never has a power-up made you more grateful that games and real-life are – for the time being, at least – distinct.



PLAYSTATION PC

23. Back ache

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive**

■ When the *Mortal Kombat* series moved into 3D for *MK4*, a whole new world of pain was opened up. How Midway motion-captured this one doesn't bear thinking about. But with a bit of luck it's missed any major organs and he'll be able to leap up and bite off someone's nose... or something.



PLAYSTATION

22. Bone o'fido

■ Publisher: **Virgin**

■ Here we've made, in every sense, a dog's breakfast of *Resident Evil 2*. In many ways these canine tormentors deal a more hurtful death than their zombie masters, gnawing on your fibulae as you lie there and watch.



NINTENDO 64

17. Singe along

■ Publisher: **Nintendo**

■ Lava has always had a detrimental effect on game characters. But Mario takes it worse than most. The highly flammable dungarees he wears in *Super Mario 64* mean that the slightest whiff of the stuff sends him rocketing thousands of feet into the air, clutching at his posterior and cursing vehemently (in Italian, thankfully).

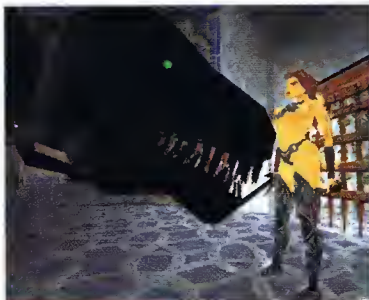


PLAYSTATION

16. Shunt if I were you

■ Publisher: **MicroProse**

■ A couple of hours with *Ultimate Race Pro* and you can be sliding around corners with the rear tyres smoking and a grin on your face. Until, that is, you feel the back end sliding round to overtake the front and realise some cad – some rotter – has given you a nudge from behind. Bastards.



PLAYSTATION PC

15. That rex everything

■ Publisher: **EIDOS**

■ The dinosaurs died out 65 million years ago, but videogame players would be forgiven for thinking otherwise. Tyrannosaurus rex seems particularly reluctant to go quietly. Here he's about to sink his teeth into Sonja from *Deathtrap Dungeon* – without even letting her get dressed first.



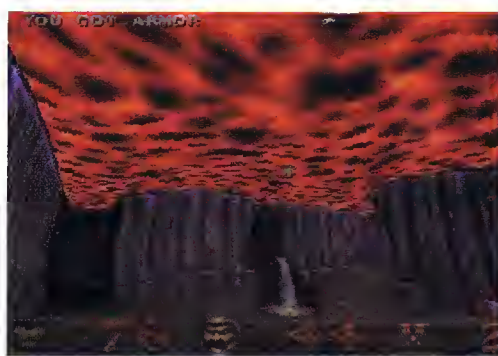
PLAYSTATION

14. Pain beyond pain

■ Publisher: **SCEE**

■ Imagine having your tooth drilled without an anaesthetic, *Marathon Man*-style, while simultaneously listening to every entry from the 1985 Eurovision Song Contest, all played simultaneously on Matsui music centres. Incredible though it may seem, that's only a sixth as excruciating as this move from *Battle Arena Toshinden*

THE TOP 50 MOST PAINFUL GAMING MOMENTS



NINTENDO 64 PC

11. Hot bath

■ Publisher: **Activision**

■ Lava – as featured in **Quake** – seems to hold a singular fascination for those who make games. Graphic artists who normally have to stick to brown and grey can let rip with all the red and orange they've got. And sound effects men can compete with one another to create the perfect "AIIIEEEE! ARRGHH! OOH-YAH!"



NINTENDO 64

8. Laying down arms

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive**

■ Lose an arm in a threshing machine and you'll probably faint and wake up in hospital pumped so full of morphine you won't feel a thing. But Bullzeye here, in **Biofreaks**, allows himself no such luxury. Brushing off the blood squirting from his dangling artery he's continued his bout and won! We suspect he might go back to the changing rooms and cry, though.



NINTENDO 64

13. Teeth-clenching self-hate

■ Publisher: **Rare**

■ Finishing a level of **Blast Corps** takes meticulous planning, hyper-precise joystick control and nerves of titanium. So absolutely the last thing you want to do is accidentally crash your digger into the nuclear lorry you've been trying to protect for the last half an hour, instantly triggering an apocalyptic explosion that destroys half the free world.

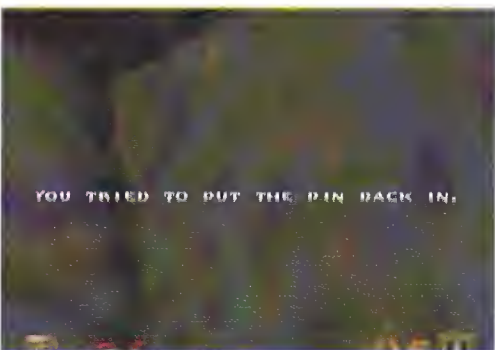


NINTENDO 64

10. Crushing defeat

■ Publisher: **Nintendo**

■ It's the final lap of **Mario Kart 64**. Kong's out of the running after falling in the lava ages ago. Luigi's suffered red shell trouble all race. And Yoshi's struggling hard. You're home and dry. If, that is, you can just make it safely through this... room... full of... Thwomps... NOOOOO! Flat as a pancake and – NO! – where did Luigi come from? And... gagh!



NINTENDO 64 PC

7. Own goal

■ Publisher: **Activision**

■ Getting a gibbing from your own grenade in **Quake** hurts on many levels. There's the obvious searing agony of shrapnel tearing through your body. But there's also the numb kind of pain you get in your stomach after being hoisted by a petard originally meant for another. And the discomfort of having to sheepishly restart, hoping no-one's noticed.



NINTENDO 64

12. Electro complex

■ Publisher: **Virgin**

■ How we laughed as Jerry plugged Tom's tail into the mains socket and he leapt into the air, electricity flashing around his silhouetted skeleton. But it's true. That's what actually happens when you get electrocuted. The proof is here in **Agent Armstrong**, where our hero gets himself cattle-prodded by one of the meaner agents.



NINTENDO 64

9. Fallen angel

■ Publisher: **Nintendo**

■ There's little in this world more fragile than Ibis (from **PilotWings 64**) suspended beneath a hang-glider. Like a single strand of gossamer, she floats through the ether, batted this way and that by the slightest draught. Until, that is, you oafishly run out of airspeed and send her spiralling to earth, to land with an eye-watering crump.



PC

6. Car-nage

■ Publisher: **Nintendo/Rare**

■ The dawn chorus had scarcely begun than you'd sprung out of bed and began to polish your Mondeo. A morning's bustle with a chamois and every panel was gleaming. Little did you imagine that a few hours later you'd be sandwiched between two Volvos, a Laguna and an Accord with your Turtle Waxed bumper scraping along the tarmac. Such is **TOCA**.

PC

5. Shock troops

■ Publisher: Sierra Studios

■ They're among the most disgusting creatures in videogaming, with their pointy fingers, their hunched backs and that creaky noise they make – "Oooh, aaah, die!", it sounds like. Luckily a single shot to the head takes down these slimy **Half-Life** aliens, leaving their horrid webbed feet



flapping feebly in the air. A moment too slow, though, and their crackling electric attack makes the hairs stand up on the backs of your hands – and your health points disappear by the score.

PLAYSTATION PC

NINTENDO 64

4. Patella terror

■ Publisher: GT Interactive

■ Ooh, no. Eurch. This one hurts just to write about. In fact, you're just going to have to look at the picture from **Mortal Kombat 4**, we're afraid. You'll have to imagine for yourself the tearing tendons, the snapping sinews, the crunching cartilage, the squirting synovial fluid. You'll



have to picture the protruding splinters of femur and shin, the flapping skin and the shredded calf. And you'll have to conjure up, without our help,

the accompanying sound – something akin to a bunch of celery being folded in half. Noob's dancing days are over, by the looks of it. Ugh.



PC

3. It's all your fault

■ Publisher: Take 2 Interactive

■ You hand-picked them from the finest straight-bred Americans: the elite of the elite of Tom Clancy's **Rainbow Six**. You constructed an assault plan so brilliant that your men first wept at its poetry then swarmed eagerly from the briefing room towards the occupied

embassy. You waited till all were perfectly positioned, and then gave the signal. You watched as your men sprang from their positions, launched their smoke grenades, and blundered straight into a room full of terrorists because you'd got confused on the tactics screen and put a waypoint in the wrong place. You witnessed the resulting bloodbath. You witness it again every night as you lie awake in bed, unable to sleep for the guilt.

PLAYSTATION PC

2. A drop too much

■ Publisher: EIDOS

■ We all have a strange relationship with Lara Croft. Be it sister, mother or secret lover, she's probably one of the strongest female role models in our lives. But although she'll soak up damage like a trooper, Lara does eventually reach her limit. Hurl her off a

high enough cliff in **Tomb Raider III** and, after a lengthy plummet, she'll smack into the ground and lie there in a crumpled heap, limbs bent hither and thither, looking more like a game of pick-up-sticks than an adventurer. It's not so much the pain – death will have been instant – as the shock of Lara's mortality. One moment she's leaping dynamically from ledge to ledge, so full of energy and vitality; the next she's cold and still.



NINTENDO 64

1. For your aggravation only

■ Publisher: Nintendo/Rare

■ Videogames can be terribly insensitive. "Mission failed!" they'll proclaim, almost smugly. "I know!" you'll cry. "I know I failed! I don't need to hear it from you! So what, like, if my dog died, you'd gleefully splash 'Your dog is dead!' across the screen? Have a heart! Just take me to the 'Retry/Exit' screen so I can have another go. And while I'm waiting, some flowers or something might be nice!" But no, it doesn't happen. Videogames are a cruel mistress, and failure is most often

met with cold indifference.

GoldenEye 007, though, has to go one step further. As your gallant Bond takes that final bullet, your body armour long expended, blood runs down the screen. "Ba-ba-baaaaah!" goes the music. And then... And then it has to do it. It just can't resist switching to an out-of-body view and replaying your final moment of agony, the Spetznaz troops swarming around you, unloading their DD44s into your prone corpse.

And then, like that wasn't enough salt rubbed into your already smarting wounds, it replays it again. And again. And again. And, as your thumb fumbles for the Start button, again.

SEGA'S

DREAMCAST

STORY BY NEIL WEST

25 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW





DREAMCAST IS SEGA'S BRAND NEW VIDEOGAME CONSOLE. IT WILL ARRIVE IN THE UK THIS AUTUMN. YOU'VE ASKED US LOTS OF QUESTIONS ABOUT IT. TIME FOR SOME ANSWERS...

WHAT IS DREAMCAST?

Let's start at the beginning. Dreamcast is a new videogame console from Sega. You remember Sega – the giant Japanese games company that brought you the Mega Drive and *Sonic the Hedgehog* back in the early '90s. Since then, Sega's seen its business go decidedly pear-shaped. After the unfortunate unpleasantness of the Mega CD and 32X (two ill-advised Mega Drive add-ons), it released Saturn, a console designed to compete head-to-head with Sony's PlayStation. As it turned out, Saturn was under-powered and didn't boast the "must have" games, such as *Ridge Racer* and *Tekken*, that PlayStation had. It was a doomed console from the get-go – it quickly floundered and very soon croaked. Even Nintendo 64, despite launching two years after Saturn, quickly overtook Sega's meagre sales total and stole the number two spot with barely a backward glance.

But now Sega's back and it's looking to take revenge. The company's Dreamcast is designed to lure videogamers away from PlayStation and back to Sega. How? By offering "next generation" videogame technology that provides richer graphics, sharper sound, and a more luscious gaming experience than anything else on the market. Essentially, Sega wants Dreamcast to do to PlayStation what PlayStation did to Saturn.

Dreamcast first went on sale in Japan on 27 November, priced at ¥29,800 (£150). Head to page 16 for the full story, then come back here.

SO IS DREAMCAST ANY GOOD?

There's no denying that Dreamcast is a sexy box of state-of-the-art videogame trickery. Computer technology is constantly improving and so, much in the same way that a Walkman today does more and yet costs less than a Walkman bought a few years ago, Sega has been able to cram Dreamcast full of chips and components that simply weren't available when Sony put PlayStation together.

Under the hood of Dreamcast you'll find a 128-bit RISC Hitachi SH-4 200MHz CPU, dedicated PowerVR graphics processors from VideoLogic, a Yamaha 32-bit RISC 64-channel sound chip, 16Mb of RAM, a 12-speed CD-ROM drive and an entire *Tomorrow's World* episode of chips and processors. Sega has collaborated with Microsoft to equip Dreamcast with a Windows CE-based operating system. When coupled with all the VideoLogic graphics technology, this means that Dreamcast's innards bear more than a passing resemblance to a top-of-the-line PC.

In the end, though, a razor's only as good as the shave that you get from it – and the real test of Dreamcast is a play of its games.

WHAT DREAMCAST GAMES ARE THERE?

Dreamcast launched with just four titles. As with most new system launches, this first group of games is a strange mix of the good, the bad and the downright ugly. Each game is reviewed in this issue, starting on page 132, but here's the briefest of brief low-downs: *Virtua Fighter 3tb* is great – a fine conversion of a fine coin-op; *Godzilla Generations* looks amazing and is amusing in a "Look at me!" kind of a way for the first half hour or so; *Pen Pen Tricelon* is weird, but no weirder than a lot of other things you and three of your closest pals could be doing huddled together in a darkened room; and finally *July* is impenetrable – it's an avant-garde, text-based adventure game. In Japanese.

Then there's *Sonic Adventure*, the game that Sega hopes will do for Dreamcast what *Super Mario 64* did for Nintendo 64. It was released on 23 December and you can find out more about it on page 53. As this part of *Arcade* goes to press, we're expecting a Federal Express package from Japan with a finished version of *Sonic Adventure*. If it gets here on time, you'll find a review on page 136. If not, you'll have to wait until next month.

WHAT DREAMCAST GAMES ARE COMING OUT IN THE FUTURE?

For a more complete round-up of upcoming Dreamcast releases, check out page 52. It's a mixed bag, to be honest, but then the first load of games released for a new console always is. The problem is that early in a system's life, the audience for games isn't very big. This means that publishers are unwilling to commit huge amounts of money to making a game that can, at best, only sell to a small number of people. It's hard for them to make money.

What you end up with is a hodge-podge of games from new developers looking to make a name for themselves, some half-arsed efforts from more established publishers fulfilling obscure contractual obligations, "trial runs" from people who want to know more about working with a system before they port their big-name hits to it, and games originally designed for other systems converted at the last minute. It's all a bit random.

Some Dreamcast games will be great. Many will be crap. Big names to look out for over the next six months or so include *Incoming* from Rage (a shoot-'em-up), *Biohazard: Code Veronica*



WHAT'S WITH DREAMCAST'S FUNNY JOYPAD?

The Dreamcast controller is straight-down-the-middle conventional. Boasting both a Nintendo 64-style analogue stick and a traditional digital D-pad, four face-mounted buttons, and two shoulder "trigger" buttons, it's essentially the same as a PlayStation Dual Shock pad (without the extra

rumbling – though a vibrating add-on is on its way). What separates Dreamcast's pad from the herd, however, is the kit you can plug into it. There are two ports at the top of the pad, into which you can stick Sega's VMS (Visual Memory System) and all manner of bits.

One other thing: first pick up a Dreamcast pad and you'll

notice that it's very small. But then it's designed for the Japanese market where gamers tend to have smaller hands. Sega's Saturn launched in Japan with a similarly tiny controller. Sega then made a bigger, chunkier version to accompany the UK release. The same upgrade is likely to happen this time around.

from Capcom (a re-working of *Resident Evil*), *Sega Rally 2* and *Virtual On* from Sega itself, and *Monaco Racing Sim* from Ubisoft.

WILL ALL THE BIG-NAME PUBLISHERS AND DEVELOPERS MAKE GAMES FOR DREAMCAST?

This is the \$6 million question. And it's this question that you can bet is keeping Sega's board of directors awake at night. It's all about building up enough momentum – gamers will only buy Dreamcast if enough big-name publishers release games for it: the big-name publishers will only release games for it if there's a big enough audience. It's

a nasty *Catch 22* situation that every hardware manufacturer is unhappily familiar with.

Right now, Acclaim, GT, Midway and Interplay are the big guns who have openly announced that they will support Dreamcast. Most of the others – EA, EIDOS, Activision, and so on – are taking a "wait and see" position.

IS DREAMCAST BETTER THAN MY PLAYSTATION?

Yes. Technically, Dreamcast is a superior system to PlayStation. You used to be able to gauge a console's strength by the muscle of its CPU (the NES and Master System boasted 8-bit CPUs, the PlayStation and

Saturn have 32-bit CPUs, Nintendo 64 has a 64-bit CPU, and so on). But today's consoles feature so many add-ons that this method of evaluation is a bit like judging cars purely by their engine size – and which offers better performance, a 1.8 litre 16 valve turbo-charged GTi or a 3 litre Mini-van?

There's no real hard rules for comparing the computational power of consoles, but "polygons per second" is as near as the industry's come to a benchmark test. Why? Because now most games feature 3D worlds, and polygons are the building blocks from which these 3D worlds are made. It's logical to say that the more polygons a console is able to draw per second, the more detailed its graphics will look and hence the "better" the console is. "When we decided to make Dreamcast

So what do you get when you open the box?



■ Dreamcast boasts a 12x CD-ROM drive.



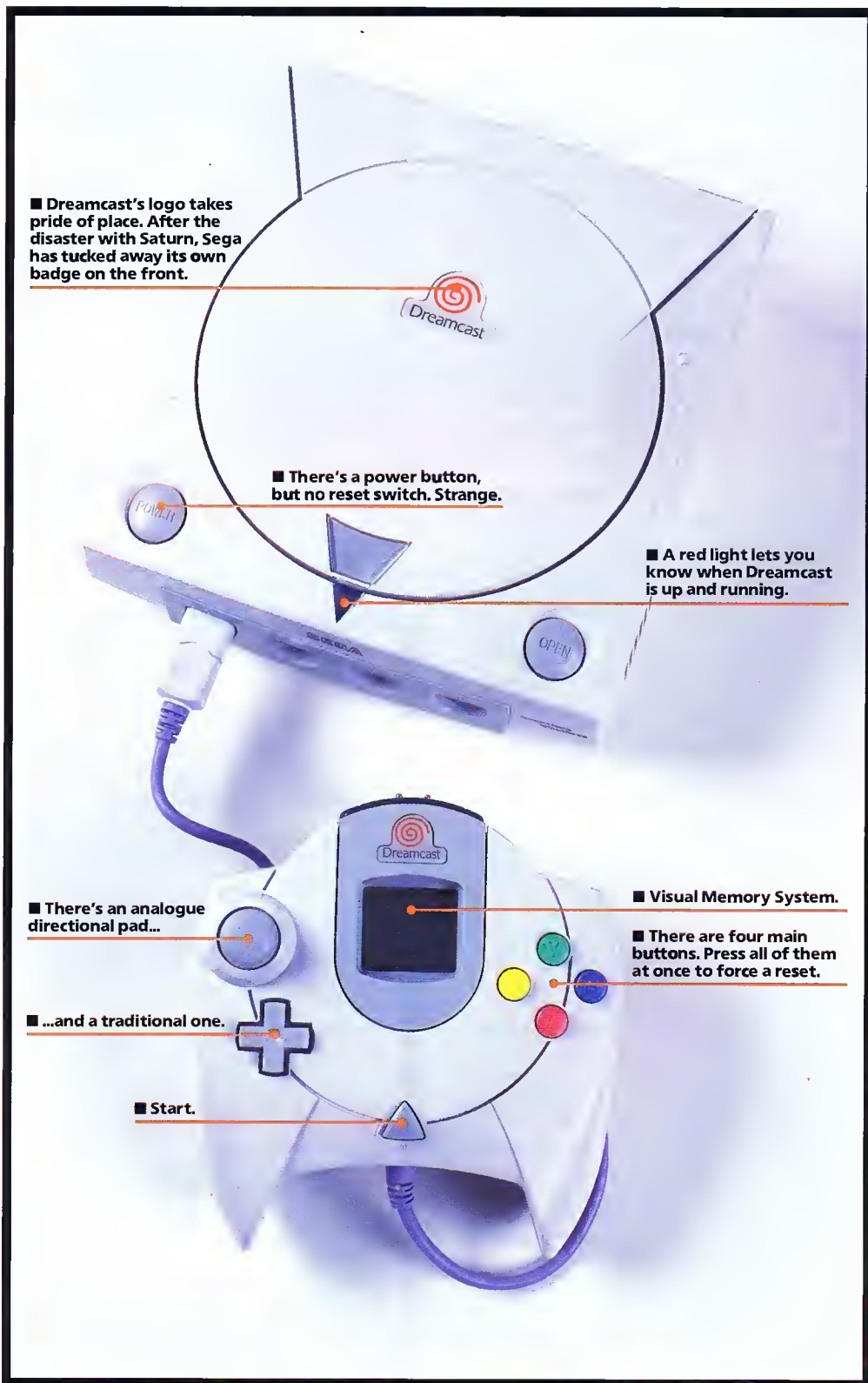
■ Four joystick ports come as standard.



■ Future peripherals will plug in via this socket at the back.



■ It's a creamy, chunky, sexy piece of kit.



the most important factor was to display as many polygons as possible," says Sega Enterprises' Hideki Sato, "especially after the criticism of the Saturn compared to the PlayStation in this area".

Sega claims that Dreamcast can generate four million p/s (polygons per second). PlayStation clocks up a meagre 360,000p/s. Do the maths.

The long answer, though, is that the best console is the one that you have most fun playing with – it's all about the *games*. Think about it. If, right now, you had to choose between a 3DO or a SNES, which would it be? In other words "better" is a relative term and a subjective opinion. And don't let any marketing hype kid you otherwise.

IS DREAMCAST BETTER THAN MY NINTENDO 64?

Same as with PlayStation – it's all down to the games that you want to play. For what it's worth, though, Nintendo 64 has been clocked at roughly 400,000p/s.

IS DREAMCAST BETTER THAN MY TOP-OF-THE-RANGE PC?

Dreamcast is very similar to a top-of-the-range PC and, in terms of delivering great gaming experience, is in some ways far ahead. The Hitachi CPU not only runs faster than a Pentium 2 but has been designed with games in mind. The CPU in a traditional PC has to be able to turn its hand to all kinds of things (word processing, downloading Internet porn and so on). Dreamcast's innards, however, are focused purely on the fast mathematics needed to shift around real-time 3D graphics. It's this streamlining that has enabled Sega to release a machine that out-performs a PC for such a low price. Try asking it to run a spreadsheet, and you'll see where Sega's cut corners.

WHY ISN'T DREAMCAST OFFICIALLY AVAILABLE IN THE UK?

New consoles generally launch around the world at different times. This is for three main reasons. First, launching a new games machine is a big deal. No, really, it's a huge undertaking. And so companies tend to chop the job into three separate chunks and stage staggered launches in Japan, Europe and the US. This way they get to focus on just one area at a time and learn from previous mistakes.

Second, different markets are ready for new consoles at different times. Japan is generally ahead of the curve as far as videogames are concerned, and so is more welcoming of a new system long before the UK is ready.

Third, you can't just ring up a bloke who owns a factory and say "Hello, Sega here. We need three million Dreamcasts by Friday week". Production of any hardware has to be ramped up slowly and gently. Manufacturing your console is dependent on all sorts of outside factors beyond your control. It's a bit like trying to organise a party when you're depending on all your mates to bring booze and food and that video of the World Cup and those decks and that lighting rig and those girls you met at the pub last week... and the risk is that all you'll end up with is your little sister and eight packets of Twiglets.

As it is, Sega hasn't even been able to make enough Dreamcasts for Japan's launch. It had hoped to make and sell 500,000 over the first couple of days but, due to a shortage of PowerVR 2DC chips from NEC, it was only able to get

150,000 machines out on the shelves. Another 350,000 reached shops before the New Year and sold out, but it wasn't the start Sega hoped for.

SO WHEN'S THE OFFICIAL UK LAUNCH DATE?

Sega's planning to launch Dreamcast in the UK "late this year". Smart money is on a September launch, giving Sega plenty of time to work up a good head of steam for the all-important Christmas spending spree.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

Sega has made no announcement on price. Right from the start, it's maintained that Dreamcast will be "affordable". How this will translate to a price at your local Dixons remains to be seen. Our guess is £199 at launch, dropping quickly to £149 nearer Christmas.

BUT I WANT ONE NOW!

Okay, Okay – then you can buy one on import (a machine designed and built for the Japanese market, but imported by a UK dealer for re-sale in the UK). Whenever a console is launched in one country before another, it always gives rise to a bustling "grey" market (so called because it's not strictly lawful, but then it's not illegal either). There are plenty of places willing to charge you an arm and a leg for an imported Dreamcast. If you don't have a local dealer, try Games Exchange on 0171 916 8440.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I PAY FOR AN IMPORTED DREAMCAST?

Due to shortages of Dreamcasts in Japan, it's taken a while for the number of Dreamcasts imported to the UK to meet

demand. On the day after Dreamcast's launch, London's Computer Exchange on the Tottenham Court Road had managed to grab only four machines, and quickly put them on sale for £2,000 each. "It's a joke price really," the shop's David Kestler told trade paper *MCV*, "we've got so few we wanted to be sure we could keep them on display." Still, *Arcade* knows of someone who turned down offers in excess of £1,500 for his machine the day after launch.

Now that things have calmed down, *Arcade* recommends paying no more than £400 for a Dreamcast with the leads, two joypads, a step-down transformer and *Virtua Fighter* and *Sonic Adventure*. The other games – if you really want them – shouldn't cost you more than £60 each. But phone round for prices – they will drop.

IF I BUY A DREAMCAST ON IMPORT, WHAT SHOULD I BEAR IN MIND?

The obvious advantage of buying on import is that you get sexy new kit before it's officially available in the shops. Additionally, because Japanese systems are designed to run on NTSC televisions (in the UK we use the PAL standard), an imported system used in the UK will run 20% faster than a home-grown one (it's all down to different screen update rates). You'll also get a better picture quality by using a SCART connection, instead of a composite lead, in your aerial socket.

Buying an import isn't without its headaches and potential pitfalls, however. If you buy from a reputable dealer, then you should be okay. But here's a checklist of things to bear in mind:
a) Different countries have different mains electricity ratings. You'll need a step-down transformer to play a Dreamcast in the UK. Plug in your imported machine into 240-volts without one and it's going to start smoking.
b) Due to the different TV systems from country



WHAT'S THAT LITTLE GAME BOY THING?

Sega's VMS (Visual Memory System) is perhaps Dreamcast's biggest innovation. It's a tiny games system in its own right with a D-pad, four buttons and a 48 x 32 pixel screen. When it works as a standalone system it does so in a very low-powered, not-even-as-advanced-as-a Game Boy kind of way, but it's also part of Dreamcast's joypad.

When used independently, it uses code downloaded from a

"proper" Dreamcast game. *Godzilla Generations*, for example, offers a Tamagotchi/*Pocket Monsters* type of sub-game in which you get the chance to create your own monster to battle *Godzilla*. We haven't had much luck with it yet (*Godzilla* always manages to kick our ass), but there's plenty of potential for fun here.

When used as an integral part of the joypad, the VMS screen displays a range of

game information pertinent to the individual player. So far, the Dreamcast games available only scratch the surface of the VMS's potential. In *Pen Pen Tricelon*, for example, you just get a full screen portrait of your game character. In *Virtua Fighter 3tb* you get nothing at all. This is a shame. But as game designers spend more time thinking about the VMS's potential, we're quite sure that they'll make more of it.

to country, you'll need an NTSC-compatible TV to play a Japanese Dreamcast in the UK.

c) Any warranty that Sega may offer becomes invalid the moment the Dreamcast leaves Japan. If your new console goes wrong, you'll have no joy ringing up Sega Europe and whining. They have no obligation to help you. So check carefully what, if any, warranty the dealer who sells you the machine offers. This is especially important with spanking new machines such as Dreamcast, because the first few batches of any brand new electronics device can be buggy and are liable to break down for no obvious reason.

d) When Dreamcast is finally released in the UK, in all probability it will incorporate some kind of lock out device to prevent people from playing Japanese or American Dreamcast titles on it. A knock-on of this is that your Japanese machine won't play UK Dreamcast games – you'll have to keep buying expensive imports. Usually this lock out can be bypassed with some kind of extra peripheral or surreptitious wire-snipping, but this will mean extra expense and/or hassle.

e) You'll be paying over the odds. But then you already knew that...

WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT A DREAMCAST MODEM?

In Japan, Dreamcast launched with a modem to enable users to access a special on-line Dreamcast site. Despite the obvious potential of this feature (multi-player games, chat rooms and so on), it's unlikely that the UK machine will incorporate it. Sega Europe perceives it as "too techie" and local phone calls are too expensive to make UK modem-gaming a mass-market proposition just yet.

WHAT DOES SONY SAY ABOUT DREAMCAST?

Sony has done a fairly good job of pretending to ignore Dreamcast. Chris Deering, the CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment, Europe, has confined his criticism of Sega's new machine to warning the more profit-minded games developers to stay away from it. "Developers who work on ports to Dreamcast should take out their calculators," he says. "PlayStation is very rapidly approaching a 50 million installed base, [and so] a title that sells an average amount on PlayStation will make more money than a hit on Dreamcast." In other words, according to Deering, developers should continue making games for Sony. Deering's conclusion? "It's unrealistic to believe that Dreamcast can catch up with [PlayStation's] kind of momentum for a long, long time."

WHAT DOES NINTENDO SAY?

Nintendo of America's President, Howard Lincoln warns gamers not to mistake hype for the real thing. "New videogame systems are always of great interest to the media and to the hardcore gamers who follow this industry closely," he says. "But for the mass majority of people it's all really a matter of games that are here and now. Dreamcast's success will be dependent on the quality of software Sega can come up with."

He also goes on to point out that just because Dreamcast's here, it doesn't mean that Nintendo 64 is over the hill. "The lifecycle of Nintendo 64 will be longer than most people think," says Lincoln, "and there are still a lot of things that can

be done technically on N64 that haven't been done. When you see games like *Zelda* and *Perfect Dark* [it will give gamers] an indication that there's still a lot of room for growth."

CAN I TRUST SEGA?

Ooh, good question. Sega came from nowhere with the Mega Drive and impressed everyone with its hardware, games and fresh attitude. But as the party started to end, it was gamers who were left to pick up the tab. Many Mega Drive owners forked out for a Mega CD or 32X and found themselves with expensive, under-powered failures. Then came Saturn and a whole new nightmare of bad games and unfulfilled promises. Basically, over the last few years the Sega name has been somewhat comprehensively dragged through the mud.

So why should anyone trust Sega this time around? Shoichiro Irimajiri, President of Sega Enterprises in Japan, offers a few words: "When we went into the Saturn project, the culture of Sega was formed mainly by the arcade business. We were not ready to go to the consumer market, and that resulted in a terrible experience," he admits. "Now we have learned from our mistakes and we are ready." And his overall conclusion? "Dreamcast is 20 or 30-times more powerful than Saturn, so it's clear that the machine is very different. But the biggest difference is not the technology but our mindset."

Certainly there's been a big re-shuffling of Sega's key management in all major territories, but whether or not this new mindset is real or imagined, only time will tell.

WHAT ABOUT PLAYSTATION 2?

No one here at Arcade doubts that PlayStation 2 will be far more powerful than Dreamcast. Sony's technology

experts are smarter. Sony's in-house pool of resources is bigger. Sony's manufacturing muscles are, well, beefier. PlayStation 2 is also a year or two "newer" than Dreamcast – and hence will be able to use more efficient and powerful components. And in a head to head fight with Dreamcast, we have no doubt that Sony's new machine (even though we haven't seen it yet) would emerge victorious.

But what might save Sega is Sony's reluctance to let PlayStation 2 join the fight.

Ironically, it could well be the phenomenal success of PlayStation that gives Dreamcast its chance. Why? Because the original PlayStation is doing so well – and continuing to do well for longer than anyone anticipated – that Sony simply can't afford to replace it. It would be killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. For some while it's been assumed that PlayStation 2 would launch late this year. Now it wouldn't be at all surprising if Sony decided to give the original PlayStation another year in the limelight and put its successor back a year to 2000 – and give Dreamcast an extra year of breathing room.

SO SHOULD I START SAVING?

It's simply too early to tell. How Dreamcast does in Japan over the next nine-months-or-so prior to the UK launch will give us the best indication as to whether or not it will be a "must buy" or whether you'll be better off just sticking with your PlayStation or Nintendo 64. In the end, it's all down to the new games – if developers manage to squeeze enough "must play" experiences out of Sega's new kit, then the sky's the limit. If the world's premiere games making talent ignores it in favour of the lucrative existing markets, then Dreamcast will become just another gaming backwater. We'll wait and see. For the moment, though, your existing console is by far the best option.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SWITCH DREAMCAST ON?

Like PlayStation, Dreamcast is a CD-based machine. So it comes with all kinds of extra features. It will play music CDs straight out of the box, but a quick flick through all of the options available will soon have you itching to buy extra memory cards, joypads and spare VM S units – just to see what your new machine does with them.



■ Choose from one of four options.

■ Memory cards are read via the joypads.

■ General settings include language and time.

■ Slap in any music CD and Dreamcast will play it.



“What do you think of it so far?”

Arcade shares an office with many other computer and videogame magazines – so there are a lot of videogame experts hanging around. We asked them to give us their first impressions of Sega's new machine.

Andy Smith | Editor
Future Gamer



"I'm a big Sega fan and was looking forward to Dreamcast. I'm not disappointed, but I'm not blown away either. *Virtua Fighter* is great. I played *Pen Pen Tricelon* for about a minute and had no idea what I was doing. I'm going to sit on the fence until I've played some more."

Cathy McKinnon | Deputy Art Editor
GamesMaster



"I like the packaging – an orange box conceals the white and surprisingly small console. It feels good and solid, too. I enjoyed playing *Pen Pen*, although it took me a while to adjust to the new controllers. But until I have a proper go at *Sonic Adventure* I don't want to buy one."

Rich Pelley | Staff Writer
Arcade



"I'll always raise an interested eyebrow at a new console, saving a second eyebrow to raise or scowl once it's had the once-over. The first thing I noticed about Dreamcast is how heavy it is. I like the logo, too. Clever stuff. Don't think much of the games, though. Sorry."

Mark Green | Staff Writer
Arcade



"The first thing that hit me was how small it was. And white. After that, there was crushing disappointment at the rubbishness of the games. *Virtua Fighter 3* is okay, and *Pen Pen* is funny, but Sega will have to do a lot better to get a Dreamcast into my living room."

Robin Alway | Reviews Editor
Arcade



"It looks like a Breville Pie Magic and – *Virtua Fighter 3tb* excepted – has the worst launch line-up since the Spectrum, but there's no denying it's potential. Even *Godzilla* points to some power under Dreamcast's bonnet. With luck *Sonic* and others will lead the way..."

Matt Pierce | Reviews Editor
PC Gamer



"Three games do not a successful console make. Especially not these three. *Virtua Fighter* is near arcade-perfect, but the hulking *Godzilla* and the twee weirdness of *Pen Pen* set an alarmingly early precedent of mediocrity. Early days, perhaps; but hugely disappointing so far."

Andy Dyer | Editor
PlayStation Max



"*Godzilla*'s a turkey but gives a hint of what Dreamcast can deliver. *VF3tb* is pretty tight so that's another reason to be cheerful. And even though it's nothing like when *Mario 64* hit us, as long as the games keep coming I think there's reason to be cautiously optimistic."

Nail West | Editor
Arcade



"I'm a big fan of the *Virtua Fighter* series – always have been – so for *VF3tb* alone I give Dreamcast a thumbs up. *Godzilla* and *Pen Pen* are like the people you meet on your first day at college – you try hard to like them, but in a few months you'll have moved on."

Marcus Hawkins | Editor
GamesMaster



"My first impressions? It's a chunky bit of kit. But where's the reset button? *Virtua Fighter 3*'s a sumptuous looking arcade heavyweight but Sega needs *Sonic Adventure* and *Sega Rally 2* to make a real impact. I reckon Dreamcast will be a slow grower. I'll look again in six months."

Steve Jarrett | Ex-Editor
Edge



"Awesome. There, I've said it. It's small, neat, well designed, solid and supremely powerful. Even third-rate stuff like *Godzilla* demonstrates the pixel-shifting prowess of the machine. Sega has delivered on its hardware promise; now it's up to the software engineers."

Sean Aldins | Editor
PlayStation Power



"Everyone's forgetting that Dreamcast's launch line-up is designed for the Japanese market – and Japanese gamers love *Virtua Fighter*. Personally, I'm waiting for *Sega Rally 2*. Then I'll wait and see what games Sega comes up with for its European Dreamcast debut."

Vicki West | Production Editor
Future Gamer



"You can tell that Sega's trying to distance Dreamcast from the company's troublesome past – the Sega logo is tiny! I think the games look better than anything else I've seen, but four hundred quid for an import system? That's too much. I'll wait until the price comes down."

Sam Richards | Staff Writer
Arcade



"It's impossible to judge Dreamcast on such a small and unusual range of games. I think *Pen Pen* is the best – at least in terms of showing off Dreamcast's graphics. It's not a massive leap forward from PlayStation or N64, though. *Sonic* will be the true test of Dreamcast's calibre."

Tim Weaver | Deputy Editor
N64



"Dreamcast is slightly underwhelming. *Virtua Fighter 3* is solid and playable but, at its best is only *Tekken 3*'s equal. *Godzilla* turns out to be a pitiful rendition of the N64's *Blast Corps*. The difference between *Pen Pen* and a hi-res *Turok 2* is negligible. I'm not impressed, I'm afraid."

Emma Parkinson | Operations Editor
Arcade



"I can't find it in myself to criticise the orange be-squiggled one just yet – it's just too soon to tell. What we've seen are very early games, and there's still a great deal left that inspired developers can do to squeeze more impressive performance out of future offerings."



Sweet sixteen

Every new games machine needs some new games – and some old favourites – for you to stick in it. The following 16 titles are *Arcade's* pick of Dreamcast's future release schedule, and offer the best hope of realising the machine's potential.



Sega Rally 2

■ **Developer:** Sega
 ■ **In a nutshell:** direct conversion of the arcade favourite. The original *Sega Rally* was one of the flagship games of Dreamcast's predecessor (the Saturn), and still plays as one of the best home racing games this side of *Gran Turismo* on the PlayStation. Expect the Dreamcast to do things even better.
 ■ **Watch out for:** split-screen mode and a whopping 40 courses.



EGG

■ **Developer:** Hudson
 ■ **In a nutshell:** *Elemental Gimmick Gear* (to give it its full name) is an action-RPG using real actors. It's set in the city of Fogna where, because of a natural disaster, the people are trying to rebuild their lives and culture. Most of the game is hand-drawn 2D, but it switches to 3D when you face any of the bosses.
 ■ **Watch out for:** plenty of typically quirky Japanese weirdness.



Evolution

■ **Developer:** Sega
 ■ **In a nutshell:** 3D graphic adventure, with multiple-choice question and answer sessions, a heavy plot, plenty of *Final Fantasy VII*-style battles, and characters with that boast interesting names, such as Mag Launcher.
 ■ **Watch out for:** outlandish in-game headgear, and lots of Japanese text.



Power Stone

■ **Developer:** Capcom
 ■ **In a nutshell:** True 3D fighting game, with a cast of eight hugely varied characters. On-screen objects, such as crates and park benches, can be picked up and hurled; beams and roof tops can be climbed on to; and some impressive weapons – including bazookas and flame throwers – can be picked up during the course of the game.
 ■ **Watch out for:** enormous crushers and breakable shop windows.



Tyo Golf

■ **Developer:** Sega
 ■ **In a nutshell:** details are sparse, but *Tyo Golf* looks like it's going to combine large, manga-style graphics with the more traditional aspects of other golf games. Quite what it is that makes Japanese golf courses look different remains a mystery.
 ■ **Watch out for:** big-eyed babes.



SpikeOut

■ **Developer:** Sega
 ■ **In a nutshell:** unlike most other beat-'em-ups, *SpikeOut* places new emphasis on co-operation between players. Not only must you focus on fighting for yourself, but you must also keep a constant eye on your partner. You can go into buildings, up fire escapes and down into sewers while you fight.
 ■ **Watch out for:** 40 playing areas, 12 characters, and a selection of knife, crowbar and baseball bat-bearing combatants.



Incoming

■ **Developer:** Rage
 ■ **In a nutshell:** PC-originated old-skool shoot-'em-up where you get to commandeer practically every form of military transport under the sun, from F1 planes, to helicopters, to ground-based anti-aircraft guns. The PC version was a visual banquet, and the Dreamcast version looks like it's going to be better.
 ■ **Watch out for:** itchy trigger fingers.



Blue Stinger

■ **Developer:** Climax
 ■ **In a nutshell:** action adventure with *Jurassic Park* tendencies. Set on a secret island off the Yucatan Peninsula, government forces have built a city and begun a huge research program, but then everyone mysteriously disappears. You guide a group round the island to find out what's going on, armed to the teeth with shotguns, grenade launchers and plasma guns.
 ■ **Watch out for:** dinos the height of skyscrapers.



Mortal Kombat 4

■ **Developer:** Midway
 ■ **In a nutshell:** *Mortal Kombat 4* has been released on every current system from the N64 to the Game Boy. The N64 version was near-arcade perfect, and you can be assured that the Dreamcast version will be even closer.
 ■ **Watch out for:** babalities, grabable scenery, 3D backdrops and plenty of blood.



Unreal

■ **Developer:** Epic Megagames
 ■ **In a nutshell:** fantastic first-person shooter that originated on the PC, relying heavily on up/down movement as well as the horizontal plane found in most in 3D shooters. It's hoped that multi-player *Unreal* should flag off Dreamcast's on-line capabilities, and the release version should probably feature some sort of single-machine multi-player game.
 ■ **Watch out for:** high AI: your enemies will duck, roll and aim.



Geist Force

■ **Developer:** Sega
 ■ **In a nutshell:** real-time, eyeball-bursting, gorgeous-looking, into the screen shoot-'em-up set in a futuristic aeroplane; a kind of *Afterburner* for the millennium. The action swings to the side at appropriate moments and multiple camera angles promise that your retinas will never get bored.
 ■ **Watch out for:** 60-frame-per-second updates will make it smoother than Des Lynam on the pull.



D2

■ **Developer:** Warp
 ■ **In a nutshell:** horror-adventure game, split into travelling and fighting sections. The plot centres around Laura who – following a premonition that involves a huge meteorite hitting Earth – is involved in an air crash and wakes up in a strange hut guarded by two aesthetically challenged monsters. Your first objective is to work out what the hell is going on.
 ■ **Listen out for:** incidental in-game music from a full-blown orchestra.



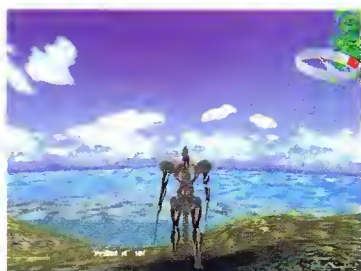
Daytona USA 2

■ **Developer:** Sega
 ■ **In a nutshell:** another direct coin-op-to-Dreamcast driving game. The original *Daytona* suffered from appalling pop-up in the Saturn conversion (where distant objects suddenly appear from nowhere when you approach them). The Dreamcast's extra power should do the follow-up a little more justice.
 ■ **Watch out for:** A futuristic track that's set in a space-age city.



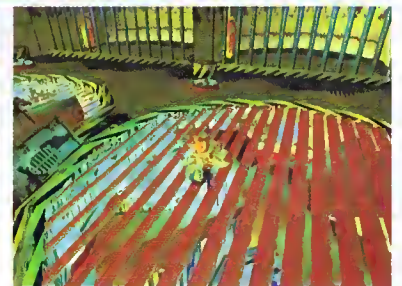
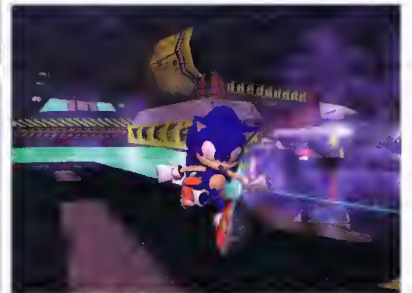
Climax Landers

■ **Developer:** Climax
 ■ **In a nutshell:** 3D role-playing, graphic adventure, with cute, cartoony graphics, a panning camera and real-time gameplay, very much in the mould of *Zelda* on the N64. Likely to be highly unplayable on Japanese import due to the heavy text-based nature of the puzzles.
 ■ **Watch out for:** a great big helping of high-res polygon madness.



Seventh Cross

■ **Developer:** NEC
 ■ **In a nutshell:** a bizarre Tamagotchi-style breed-'em-up. You create a character – select its DNA by placing coloured squares on a 10 x 10 matrix – and then nurture your unique embryo to adulthood, killing the island's other lifeforms for food. It all sounds a little bit weird and, if the Japanese gaming tradition is anything to go by, it probably will be.
 ■ **Watch out for:** naked arses.



Sonic Adventure

■ **Publisher:** Sega

■ **In a nutshell:** Sega's big hope for Dreamcast has to be *Sonic Adventure*. Without the original *Sonic The Hedgehog*, the Mega Drive would never gotten as far as it did. Sonic's return in 3D will be used as a barometer for gauging Dreamcast's graphical potential – and a lot of software publishers are postponing the development of their own Dreamcast games until they've seen it.

■ **Watch out for:** All the features you remember from the original *Sonic* games (the robot enemies, Dr. Robotnik, gold rings and plenty of speedy running), but now in 3D.

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JUST STARTED?

PHOTOGRAPHY: AMANDA THOMAS

Treated yourself to a **PlayStation** for Christmas? Just bought a shiny new **PC** in the sales? Nicked your nephew's **Nintendo 64**? Now let *Arcade* help you get up to speed. Life is too short to play anything but the very best games, and money's far too tight to waste on second-grade add-ons. So over the next six pages we show you which game to buy, which to rent, where your system came from and how to win pub fights over why your system's best...

PLAYSTATION

PlayStation is the most popular videogame console in the world.

Over one-in-ten UK households with a TV have one. Well done if you managed to get hold of one over Christmas – shortages made

Santa's job hell – but assuming you were lucky, let's get stuck in...



■ PlayStation refreshes the parts other games machines have never been able to reach.

Breaking all records

All you need to know about the world's favourite games machine.

It's only three years old, but PlayStation is more popular than a hypothetical charity single featuring Robbie Williams, Kate Winslet and Boyzone. It's considerably more entertaining, too. It's a phenomenon. It's the biggest, most successful videogame console ever. And it took everyone by surprise, coming from Sony – a company with about as much hardcore videogame experience as the man from Del Monte. But right from the start it was obvious that PlayStation was going to be something a little bit special, sending gaming veterans like Sega scuttling for the bathroom in terror.

Back in 1995, Sony came into the games industry with the complete package: it had the best technology, it had a wallet stuffed with cash, and it had a far sharper marketing savvy. While Nintendo still targeted school playgrounds, the Walkman boys aimed for the twentysomethings, ran promotions in night clubs and let the entire world know that PlayStation wasn't kids' stuff.

The very first PlayStation games helped cement this older image, with *WipEout*, a futuristic racer from Psygnosis,



■ It's small and grey. Like a mouse. But easier to plug in.

featuring music from The Chemical Brothers and funky Designers Republic imagery. Fighting game *Tekken* kicked ass. *Ridge Racer* burned rubber. With these extremely grown-up games, PlayStation wooed the public and won.

Despite a few wrong turns (let's not forget the "Society Against PlayStation" TV ads – featuring a tall, thin man with glasses ordering people not to buy one) Sony's handling of PlayStation has been a lesson in how to do marketing right. And it won't be satisfied until it's turned those four shapes on your controller (the square, cross, triangle and circle) into the PlayStation equivalent of the Nike "Swoosh" or McDonald's golden arches.

PlayStation has so much momentum that it's hard to

see it running out of steam any time soon. The games keep getting better and better, and while Nintendo 64 owners may correctly argue that the best Nintendo games are better than the best PlayStation games, Sony has two big trumps: choice and price. There are so many games released for PlayStation each month that you're bound to find a new classic or two among them. And there's no arguing with Sony's Platinum Collection of great – albeit slightly old – games, re-released at just £20. A bargain, in any language.

If you're a PlayStation owner, then count yourself lucky, safe in the knowledge that your games system is destined to live, thrive and survive for years to come.

How to...

Stuck on a game? It happens. It's a good job, then, you can cheat...



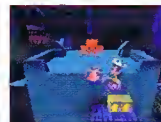
Score every time in FIFA 99

■ Always crossing into the box in an attempt to score? Foolish boy. Instead, you should be tapping X twice. This way, you'll pass to one of your men hanging around at the back, who's all ready to kick the ball into the net.



Cheat like a bastard in Tomb Raider III

■ If our full guide on page 76 isn't enough for you, try this. In-game, press L2, R2, R2, L2, L2, L2, L2, R2, R2, L2, L2, R2, R2, L2, L2, R2, L2. Lara will then have all the weapons, medkits, flares and save game crystals. Sweet.



Bike to victory in Crash Bandicoot 3

■ Tired of getting knocked off your bike by your opponents in the motorcycle time trials? Hang around on the starting line until those bad boys have gone, and you can bike on without running the risk of ending up snagging the ground.



Stop dying in Spyro the Dragon

■ Falling off cliffs and ledges is always an annoying way to lose a life. So, just after you fall off, press pause and exit the level. You'll restart at the last portal with all your lives intact. Mint!



Win every round in Tekken 3

■ No-one likes losing, so why not select Yoshimitsu and perform the Shark Attack move at the beginning of every round. This tactic should polish off most opponents immediately, making you an official Tekken God.

JUST STARTED?



Five classic PlayStation games

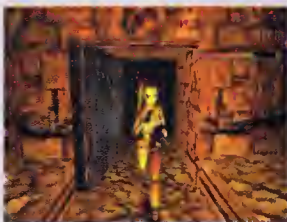
Owning a PlayStation and not buying these games should be punishable by law.



ISS Pro '98

■ Publisher: Konami ■ Price: £45

■ Football and PlayStation go together like a nice pint of lager and another nice pint of lager, and ISS Pro '98 is simply the best footy game available. It's got moves smoother than a grade-zero hair trim, and visuals so realistic that you ought to need a TV licence to watch them. It features all the teams from the World Cup and commentary from Tony Gubba. On these cold winter evenings, it's even better than the real thing.



Tomb Raider III

■ Publisher: EIDOS ■ Price: £45

■ Want to find out what all the Lara Croft fuss is about? Then you might as well get yourself stuck straight in to her latest and greatest adventure. Lara's an archeologist, but like Indiana Jones (who Lara's designer admits was a huge influence) her life involves a lot more than simple pot-scrubbing and soil-shifting. Puzzles, guns, dangerous animals, life-threatening leaps and underwater swimming – it's all part of her day's work.



Gran Turismo

■ Publisher: SCE ■ Price: £45

■ Rival games developers cried into their beers when this world-beating racing game showed what PlayStation had secretly been capable of. Gran Turismo features an entire showroom of real-world high-performance cars. You don't just get to drive them, they can also be fine-tuned to an extent that would confuse the bloke from Kwik Fit. What's more, the near-TV quality of the replays will make your jaw say "Hello" to the carpet.



Tekken 3

■ Publisher: Namco ■ Price: £35

■ Namco's Tekken series is almost universally regarded as the source of PlayStation's best fighting action. While this threequel isn't particularly innovative, it's still a blockbuster – in every sense. With characters rendered in astonishing detail and faster moves than Michael Flatley on amphetamines, Tekken 3 is a beat-'em-up that's easy for beginners but promises near-infinite depth for anyone who's willing to follow "the way".



Resident Evil 2

■ Publisher: Capcom ■ Price: £45

■ Ever wanted to star in your own zombie-slashing movie? Well now's your chance. Critics the world over have praised Resident Evil 2 as one of the most atmospheric and genuinely frightening videogames ever created. The camera angles are chosen so well, the twists and turns of the intricate plot inserted so expertly, and the huge scares delivered so frequently that you'll be hooked. Just don't play it with the lights off. And wear a nappy.

Unmissable bargains

Sony's Platinum label re-releases older classics at the unbeatable price of just £20.



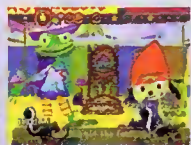
WipeOut 2097

■ The success of futuristic racing game WipeOut is one of the reasons why PlayStation got where it is today. And it's easy to see why. It features pumping tunes and a velocity to make Road Runner blush.



Soul Blade

■ Want to get medieval on your mate's ass? Then try this. Released between the Tekken instalments, Namco's olde-worlde beat-'em-up makes fighting fun by giving the characters a range of big sticks and axes.



Parappa The Rapper

■ Don't ask us why pressing buttons in time to music in order to make a cartoon dog rap is so enjoyable, but at least try it for yourself. You'll be humming the tunes in your sleep.

Essential add-ons

Got extra cash? Then these gizmos will "giz" you the "most".

Steering wheel

■ From: Thrustmaster
■ Price: £69.99

■ PlayStation's joypad isn't great for driving games. Luckily, this steering wheel and foot pedal combo is great. A must-have for all serious racing fans.



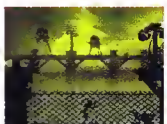
Light gun

■ From: Joytech
■ Price: £34.99

■ It only works with games specifically designed for it (like Point Blank and Time Crisis) but point it at the screen and you'll feel like Dirty Harry Callahan.

Rent before you buy

Most people love 'em, others don't get it. So try before you buy....



Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee

■ Publisher: GT
■ Price: £45

■ Cute as a button and chatty as a London cabbie, Abe the alien wanders about this picturesque 2D platform game, jumping, running and solving head-scratching puzzles. The intro sequence is even up for an Oscar.



Crash Bandicoot 3

■ Publisher: SCE
■ Price: £40

■ Despite its slightly repetitive nature, this is as near as PlayStation gets to a Mario game. The speedy into-the-screen 3D bits mix happily with the more open "wander around" areas, and it all looks like a cool TV cartoon.



Colin McRae Rally

■ Publisher: Codemasters
■ Price: £40

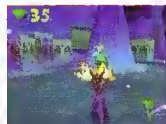
■ If F1 racing isn't to your taste, try this authentic freewheel around the English countryside. The clock's your only opponent, and the brake's your only guard against becoming intimate with a hedge.



Final Fantasy VII

■ Publisher: SquareSoft/SCEE
■ Price: £45

■ Forget Titanic – this is the greatest story ever told, and you get to play the leading role. Final Fantasy VII is classed as an RPG (role playing game) but you could just as easily call it an "interactive movie".



Spyro The Dragon

■ Publisher: SCE
■ Price: £35

■ Don't be put off by the bright colours and inane grin of Spyro. This game can make itself as difficult as a particularly stubborn mule. Still, your kids will love it (and help you when you get stuck on level three).

Pub ammo

Unarguable proof that PlayStation is best.

■ PlayStation's library of games is over 500 strong. So if you were to play every game for around an hour, and assuming that you had eight hours sleep each day to recover, it would take you over a month to work your way through them all. Please don't actually try and do this, though.

■ If you own a PlayStation, you've got something in common with around three million other people in the UK alone. By contrast, if you wear an eye-patch for purely cosmetic reasons, you'll only find three other Britons who do the same. And you probably wouldn't want to go down the pub with them anyway.

■ Some of the world's best games developers work primarily on PlayStation. Capcom (Resident Evil), Namco (Tekken) and SquareSoft (Final Fantasy) all turn to Sony's machine first when designing new titles, and none of them are ever likely to create a game starring a man who wears red and blue dungarees.

■ If you've ever had a long-term love, you'll be aware that the longer you spend with someone, the better you get to know them. And that this is a good thing. Because PlayStation's been hanging about for three years now, developers know the machine inside out, and can tease the very best from it. (Although some of them complain that the sex isn't as exciting any more.)

■ Because PlayStation games come on CD, you get more music and sumptuous video FMV sequences for your cash. You can even play music CDs on a PSX. Despite what N64 owners might say about this, they're dead, dead jealous.



NINTENDO 64

Packed with super-expensive Silicon Graphics processors, the Nintendo 64 has got a slight graphical edge over PlayStation. It also has Shigeru Miyamoto, the world's best games designer, regularly churning out classics. But that's by no means all...

The best in the business

It may not have sold as many as PlayStation, but N64's still a beauty.

The N64 is a sturdy piece of kit. Who hasn't been turned on by the reassuring clunk of new cartridge meeting slot? Clunk! Mmmmm. Okay, so we might sound obsessed, but we're not the only ones. Nintendo's cult following is largely thanks to Nintendo's own Shigeru Miyamoto and his dream-team of programmers who've been churning out the best games in the world for the last 20-or-so years. Classics like *Mario 64*, *Zelda 64*, *Mario Kart* and *Wave Race* are the reasons why – despite not achieving the sales numbers of PlayStation – the N64 is truly loved by a core of loyal fans.

If it's so good then (you might be asking yourself) why isn't Nintendo 64 the world's number one console and PlayStation the machine with the smaller cult following? Well, a combination of poor marketing, expensive prices, multiple delays and a lack of games in crucial areas (it took ages for any decent sports games to be released on the system) gave PlayStation a massive head-start that Nintendo's never been able to catch up with.

It's this lack of games that



■ Ladies and gents: a graphical marvel.

is still Nintendo's biggest problem. Although the trickle of great Nintendo 64 releases has turned into a stream, it's still a long way from rivaling the torrent of new PlayStation games that pours into the shops each month.

Why? Without getting bogged down in the business of it all, it comes down to the use of cartridges instead of CDs. Cartridges cost more to make than CDs and so if a publisher decides to release a game on N64 then it runs a bigger risk of losing buckets of cash if the game flops. It's one thing to be left with 10,000 CDs on your hands that cost just £3 to make, it's quite another to be left with 10,000 £20 cartridges.

Only Acclaim and Nintendo itself have truly got their teeth

stuck into the business of making N64 games. And while this is okay in some ways (no one makes games better than Nintendo) it does mean that N64 will never enjoy the same volume of releases as PlayStation.

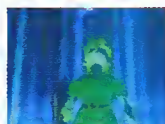
But the future is bright. With Nintendo focusing much more on the UK (typically it's ignored Europe in favour of Japan and the US), we're finally getting the big name games quickly. It's also true to say that Nintendo 64 still has lots to give in terms of untapped potential – each new game seems better than the last. And with N64 games regularly slam-dunking straight into the charts at number one, it's hard to say that N64 is in anything other than the prime of its life.



■ Nintendo 64: the best kept secret in videogames? The sales figures would certainly say so.

How to...

Even the best players occasionally need a little competitive edge.



Keep yourself healthy in The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time

■ Grab yourself an empty bottle, wander up to any cow and play "Epona's Song" (Top-C, Left-C, Right-C). They'll fill up your jar with two gulps of refreshing milk, which you can drink to restore maximum health. Yum.



Inflate heads in Turok 2

■ We're always up for a bit of big-head action. Type UBERNOODLE on the "Enter Cheats" menu option, and you can wander around laughing at the enemy's massive bonces to your heart's content. Just remember to tape your sides up when you've finished.



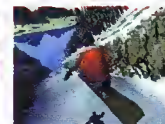
Live forever in Banjo-Kazooie

■ Go to the sandcastle in Treasure Trove Cove and use the Beak-Buster move (A then Z) to spell out CHEAT, then try AGOLDENGLOWTOPROTECTBANJO (as one word with no spaces). You'll now have infinite golden feathers. Hurrah!



Be a manager in WCW vs NWO Revenge

■ If you've got three friends round, select a two-player one-on-one exhibition match and two wrestlers with managers. If your friends press Z on the third and fourth controllers, they can take control of the managers. Yes!



Get a head start in 1080° Snowboarding

■ If you're always losing in races, try this trick. Wait until the "1" of the start countdown has just disappeared from the screen, and push Up on the stick. You should get a magic boost and leave your opponent standing, you cheeky little monkey.

JUST STARTED?



Got an N64? Then get these

Some of the best games in the world are only available on Nintendo 64.



The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

■ Publisher: Nintendo
■ Price: £50

■ Throw the 'phone in the river, lock the door and nail the catflap shut. Three years in the making and worth every second's wait, *Zelda* will eat up your time like no other game. At heart, it's a role-playing game, with the emphasis on conversations, combat and collecting objects, and it's so beautiful in glossy 3D that you'll play it until your eyes burn.



1080 Snowboarding

■ Publisher: Nintendo
■ Price: £40

■ If you're just not cool enough to be seen snowboarding with Prince William, this stunning N64 game – brought to you by the team who created the sublime *Wave Race 64* (see page 156) – is as near as dammit, You'll really be shivering as you fly majestically off ramps, glide effortlessly through deep snow and fall flat on your face, all the while admiring the sheer graphical splendour of your surroundings.



Goldeneye 007

■ Publisher: Nintendo/Rare
■ Price: £40

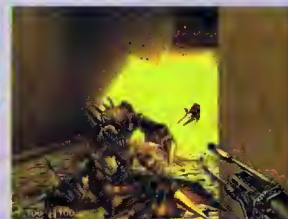
■ Step into the shoes of James Bond, strap on a satchel-full of pants-wetting guns and smack the Ruskies to kingdom come. This is as near as most of us will ever come to actually being a secret agent with a license to kill, let alone driving a tank through the streets of St Petersburg. The four-player game mode (shoot all your mates before they shoot you) is as good as gaming gets.



Mario Kart 64

■ Publisher: Nintendo
■ Price: £60

■ Comedy cartoon-style racing isn't everyone's cup of tea, but stick four people in front of an N64 loaded with *Mario Kart* and chances are you'll only get them to move again by setting their hair on fire. The game's hook comes from the pleasing ease with which you can powerslide round corners and fire all manner of projectiles up your rival's exhaust pipe. The best party game since *Strip Twister*.



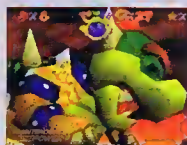
Turok 2: Seeds Of Evil

■ Publisher: Acclaim
■ Price: £40

■ Welcome to planet *Turok*, where you can fire a special weapon at someone's head and watch their brains come flying out without fear of arrest. *Turok 2* is Nintendo's biggest, goriest, best-looking 3D shooting game with prehistoric monsters that demonstrate a horrifying level of intelligence (before you blow them to pieces). You and three friends can even rumble in the jungle together.

Keep an eye out for...

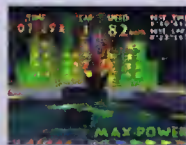
N64 has no budget games as such, but you can pick up these golden oldies second hand.



Super Mario 64

■ Publisher: Nintendo
■ Price: £40 (new)

■ This is the game that made the leap from 2D to 3D and dragged the rest of gaming with it. You must play this game.



Wave Race 64

■ Publisher: Nintendo
■ Price: £40 (new)

■ Simply the best water-based racing game ever, and still one of Nintendo 64's best-kept secrets. Grab this if you can.



Pilotwings 64

■ Publisher: Nintendo
■ Price: £40 (new)

■ Take to the skies and soar like an eagle (or plummet like a stone) in a range of different craft. It's a lot of fun.

The next level

Got four controllers? Then get these...



4Mb Expansion Pak

■ From: THE
■ Price: £29.99

■ Slot this in the top of your N64 and certain games will spurt forth with much-improved graphics. More compatible games are arriving each month.



Action Replay

■ From: Datel
■ Price: £49.99

■ Rubbish at games? Then this will let you cheat like the devil.

Off the beaten path

These games are great, and well worth checking out for yourself.



F-Zero X

■ Publisher: Nintendo
■ Price: £40

■ Want to go so fast that it'll make you cry? Futuristic racer *F-Zero* will chuck you about at 1,000kph and let you experience your last meal all over again. It's impressive enough in solo play, but in four-player mode you'll wonder just how N64 manages to keep up.



F1 World Grand Prix

■ Publisher: Nintendo
■ Price: £50

■ Okay, so F1 racing is hardly off of the beaten path, but we didn't have room to include it in the "must have" box. This game easily outclasses PlayStation's recent *F1 S8* with very little effort – just like a Porsche roaring past a Reliant Robin on the A6.



Fighter's Destiny

■ Publisher: Ocean
■ Price: £55

■ The N64 struggled for a decent fighting game until this one came along. It's more a fists-flying funkster than a considered *Tekken* or *Virtua Fighter 3* of a game, but it's still a fine punch-'em-up all round.



Mystical Ninja Starring Goemon

■ Publisher: Ocean
■ Price: £60

■ Supposedly based on an obscure Japanese legend, this 3D running/jumping/trying not to die a grisly death/role-playing hybrid won't last long, but offers a very absorbing puzzle mix in the meantime.



Lylat Wars

■ Publisher: Nintendo
■ Price: £55

■ Mr Miyamoto showing off at how good he is at making games again. This is a brilliantly-crafted old-fashioned space shoot-'em-up, with animals in the starring roles and more amusing speech than a particularly noisy Robin Williams sketch.

Pub ammo

Unarguable proof that Nintendo 64 is best.

■ Mr Shigeru Miyamoto and his team of co-programmers and designers are simply the best games developers in the world, and – like Kellogg's – they don't make games for anyone else. We know we go on about him, but he is that good. It's compulsory for the lesser N64 developers to have a bronze statue of Mr Miyamoto in their bedrooms. Or so a bloke down the pub told us.

■ Two-player link-up? Pah! The N64 offers four-player fun the moment it comes out of the box. *Mario Kart 64*, *GoldenEye 007*, *F-Zero X* and a shedful of others

offer the best multi-person shenanigans since Woodstock.

■ While other systems are stuck with purple My Little Pony's and stupid blue hedgehogs, the N64's got Mario, Yoshi, Wario and a whole host of other truly loveable characters. And, it sounds soft, but after a

while you do get attached to the little beggars.

■ Look at that controller. Hold it. Feel it. Love it. Nintendo has invented and patented the world's best joypad design. Thanks to this, Mario can negotiate treacherous platforms with ease, while the PlayStation's Lara Croft slips and falls to her death at least seven times per day.

■ While those poor PlayStation owners have to sit watching a static screen with the word "Loading" stamped across it, N64 owners get instant access from their chunky cartridges. Despite what they say, PlayStation owners are dead jealous of this.



PC: GAMES MACHINE

Costs over £1,000. Can be a bitch to use. Won't plug into your TV. Not even designed to play games. And yet some of gaming's finest – and we mean *finest* – hours take place sat in front of a PC monitor. Indeed, most hardcore gamers won't play anywhere else.



■ You can't do your homework on a PlayStation. Many kids more determined than you have tried. You can, however, mix work and play on a PC.

Business and pleasure

Confused by all this talk of "P" and "C"? Here are the facts.

The PC was never designed to be used as a games machine. It was designed for serious, officey use. But, just like every elastic band has, at some point, been twanged at an unsuspecting colleague, so every PC, sooner or later, is poked and then prodded and the fatal question "So, how do we play games on this thing?" is asked. The answer, traditionally, has been "not very easily" but now, thanks to Bill Gates and his Windows 95 operating system, running games on your PC is considerably easier than finding the soap in the bath.

While you're thanking Bill, raise a glass to 3Dfx and other technology companies who have dedicated themselves to making 3D accelerator cards. With one of these firmly slotted inside your computer, 3D shapes can fly about your monitor like daddy-longlegs gone wild. And this means that great 3D games become possible. Imagine a version of *Tomb Raider* or *Half-Life* fashioned from cardboard cut-outs and drawing pins, and you have some idea of what life without these magic circuit boards would be like. These brilliant technological



innovations helped harness the PC's power as a games machine – and this has led the PC to the forefront of a gameplay revolution.

Before 3Dfx and Win 95 came along, games on PCs were largely tedious RPGs and snooze-worthy flight sims. It was all wooden swords, woven cloaks and thousand-page instruction manuals. Nowadays games like *Quake*, *Command & Conquer*, *Half-Life*, *Grim Fandango* and *X-wing versus TIE-Fighter* offer gaming experiences that are simply leagues ahead of their console equivalents.

Gaming on the PC isn't completely glitch free – games can still take an age to install and there's a minefield of potential technological incompatibilities to negotiate

– but nevertheless, every month millions of gamers grit their teeth and dive head-first into the PC's sea of titles.

To play most new PC games at a satisfactory level you'll need at least a system based on a P166 with a 3D card (may we suggest 3Dfx's Voodoo 2) and at least 32Mb of RAM. Ideally you'll have a P233-based system with 64Mb of RAM. Of course, technology continues to march forward and so no matter what PC setup you buy, sooner or later you'll need to upgrade. But then it's the same with consoles.

On the subject of which, Sega's new Dreamcast system shares a lot of the PC's innards – so you can expect lots of games crossing between the two. Excited? You should be.

How to...

"Get it going on" with the help of these bite-size tips.



Stay alive in *Half-Life*

■ Running out of health? Always an astonishing faux pas. So plunge into the nearest (non-toxic) water, stay under until you see the O2 warning, and then come back up. You'll have gained about 15 units of health in the process. Yes!



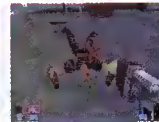
Take Abe anywhere in *Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee*

■ To bring up a list of all the levels, hold down [shift] and enter this code (using the arrow keys): Down, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Up. The world, as they say, is your oyster.



Go wherever you like within *Trespasser*

■ Tired of getting stuck on a particular level? Why not press [ctrl] + [shift] + Q + W, and then release W. Now you can confront those dodgy dinos on any level you wish.



Cheat like a bugger in *Sin*

■ Press the tilde button (~) on your keyboard to get the console, and then type /superfuzz for God mode, /health 999 for maximum health and /wuss for all weapons. It simply doesn't get any better than this, my friends.



Enjoy classic matches in *World Cup '98*

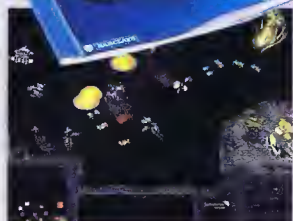
■ Go to the names menu, change the player's name to Hurst and then go back. Then trip on over to the main menu and press Scroll Lock. You've now got four classic matches to play. Alternatively, you can use the name Zico to get a historic play from 1982. Huzzah!

JUST STARTED?



The best PC games on the planet

At its best, PC gaming is as good as gaming gets. Here are five reasons why...



Starcraft

■ Publisher: **Blizzard**
■ Price: **£40**

■ The "real time strategy" (or RTS) genre of games places you at the control of a team of characters with a mission. Depending on the game you decide to buy, you might need to invade and conquer a country, build a dock and sail a boat across a river or decide whose turn it is to do the washing up and then do it (hang on, that's real life). But it's a load of fun, and nowhere is it more fun than in *Starcraft*.



Quake II

■ Publisher: **Activision**
■ Price: **£40**

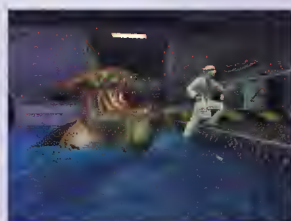
■ A first-person (the graphics show the view as if through your eyes) shooter (you shoot things) that's addictive as a solo-player game and un-putdownable in multi-player mode. *Quake II* piles on terrifying beasts, stupidly big guns and some hauntingly dark dungeons, and you'll be rounding each corner with a genuine feeling of terror. Play with a group of friends and you'll never quit.



Grim Fandango

■ Publisher: **LucasArts**
■ Price: **£40**

■ Probably the best "point-and-click adventure" ever, *Grim Fandango* is moody, funny and brilliantly designed. Set in the Land of the Dead and clad in film-noir splendour, its comedy characters, genuinely involving storyline and perplexing puzzles make for a truly enthralling experience. If you prefer your games a little slower paced than *Quake II*'s mayhem, you must try this one out.



Half-Life

■ Publisher: **Sierra**
■ Price: **£40**

■ It was a long time coming, but calling the result simply "another first-person shooter" would be an insult to Sierra's latest masterpiece. Characters interact more believably than real people, the baddies you meet demonstrate a frightening intelligence and the levels require a brain-stretching amount of lateral thinking. The last CD to contain this much entertainment was Russ Abbott's *Atmosphere*.



Tomb Raider III

■ Publisher: **EIDOS**
■ Price: **£40**

■ If you haven't invited Lara into your home yet, now's the time to do it. *Tomb Raider III*'s a big-bapped blend of sumptuous graphics, devious puzzles and all-out shooting. On a journey from dank cave systems to the streets of London, Lara won't release her hold on your waking hours until you've helped her finish her mission. And we know you're not the sort who'll refuse a lady.

Going cheap

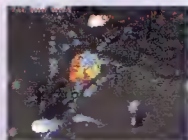
Some great games at knock-down prices.



Dungeon Keeper

■ Publisher: **EA Classics**
■ Price: **£13**

■ The opportunity to manage your own torture chamber in the pits of hell is too good to pass up, especially as this real-time strategy take on the theme is so funny.



Total Annihilation

■ Publisher: **GT Replay**
■ Price: **£13**

■ Another real time strategy game, this time set in the deep reaches of space. The 3D graphics, enormous robot and evil aliens make this every schoolboy's dream job.



LBA 2

■ Publisher: **EA Classics**
■ Price: **£13**

The sequel to the critically-acclaimed *Little Big Adventure* turns the graphics knob up to 11 and offers an intriguing world that's even more complex than the London Underground.

What next?

Your PC's crying out for its slots to be filled.

"Stuff"

Stubbornly stick to your PC's current specs and you'll find the future's best games denied to you. So get some more "stuff" in (memory, processors, all that sort of thing) and revel in the speed of your machine.

Steering wheel

■ From: **Thrustmaster**
■ Price: **£34.99**

■ A must for all those driving games you know you'll want to play. Adds immeasurably to the sense of realism.



Check these out...

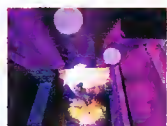
Five games that are definitely worth borrowing off your mate.



Grand Theft Auto

■ Publisher: **Take 2**
■ Price: **£19**

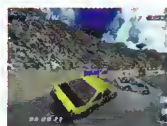
■ Bad-taste crim-'em-up where trafficking drugs, hijacking cars and smacking cops up real nice are all part of a day's work.



Forsaken

■ Publisher: **Acclaim**
■ Price: **£13**

■ *Quake* on a jet bike and transported to the future. The stunning, claustrophobic tunnels and sheer difficulty will keep you plugging away for months.



Destruction Derby 2

■ Publisher: **Psygnosis**
■ Price: **£10**

■ The game that put the 'arrrgggh!' into "arcade racing". As you skid, smash, jump and roll and through the tracks, your stomach will be in knots but your brain in rapture.



The Curse of Monkey Island

■ Publisher: **LucasArts**
■ Price: **£30**

■ One of the funniest games on any system ever. If you fancy being a pirate, digging for treasure, firing people out of cannons and having a fine laugh in the process, this is the game for you.



Rainbow Six

■ Publisher: **Red Storm** ■ Price: **£35**

■ Developed under the watchful eye of Tom Clancey, this is a first-person shooter where you'll need seven days of advance planning before you even pick up a gun. It sounds dull, but in actual fact you'll find it both intelligent and thoughtful. And difficult.

Pub ammo

Unarguable proof that PC gaming is best.

■ Run! Go on! Run as fast as you can! No matter how hard you try, you just can't run faster than a PC. Take a look under the hood and you'll soon see that a PC is technically more muscley than either PlayStation or Nintendo 64. Because of this, games look great, animate smoothly and act more intelligently. You can stop running now.

■ How many offices have you visited that don't have PCs sitting happily on the desks? How many people, when choosing a computer for the home, plump for a ZX Spectrum or Speak 'n' Spell? The PC is the most ubiquitous computing machine on the planet, so you'll never be short of games (or friends).

■ Try upgrading a PlayStation. Go on, just try. You can't, can you? And in a few years' time the little grey box will be obsolete. A very ugly £100 paperweight. PCs, on the other hand, can be constantly added to so that your machine remains on the cutting edge.

■ Despite the mouse/keyboard control combination being an absolute nightmare to begin with, once you get to grips with it you'll never want to go back to restrictions of a simple joystick. The PC's version is accurate, fast and far less stressful on the thumbs.



A Charts

Edited by | Mark Green

Christmas has been and gone. Find out what was number one and why.

Official All-Formats Top 40



ChartTrack



1 (-) FIFA 99

PSX/PC, EA Sports

It's official, then – footy beats birds. The tendency for people to buy any old FIFA game regardless of its review score is consistently depressing, but regardless of what we think, EA Sports has scored again.

2 (-) Tomb Raider III

PSX/PC, EIDOS



Lara's back with style, selling nearly 150,000 in her first three weeks on sale. If she'd only managed to flog a couple of hundred more of part three, she'd be at the top.

3 (1) Spyro the Dragon

PSX, SCE

With less than half the sales of the number two game, this cutesy, purple, fire-breathing My Little Pony drops from the top quicker than you can say "Puff".

4 (-) Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus

PSX, GT Interactive



An unsurprising crash into the top five for this excellent platformer. The prequel, though, is nowhere to be seen.

5 (7) Tekken 3

PSX, Namco



After a worrying couple of months, the King of Fighters is back to reclaim its position in the Top 5.

6 (2) TOCA Touring Car Championship

PSX/PC, Codemasters (budget)

Like a mad professor, TOCA is losing its grip but laughing at those below. Its offspring has failed to clinch a higher placing.

7 (-) TOCA 2 Touring Cars

PSX, Codemasters

Oh, the irony! Better than its prequel, but mysteriously coming in at a lower position.

8 (5) Formula 1 '98

PSX, Psygnosis

This lacklustre cash-in really deserves to be falling a lot faster than this, but there's no accounting for taste.

9 (4) Grand Theft Auto

PSX/PC, Take 2 (budget)

This cop-shooting extravaganza falls after a big climb last month. It just goes to show that crime doesn't pay after all.

10 (10) Small Soldiers

PSX/GB, EA/THQ

Dire nonsense, but the film's relative popularity has secured it a Top 10 position.

11 (6) Crash Bandicoot

PSX, SCE (budget)

After bouncing up last week, Crash 1 has bounced back down once again, thanks to Crash 3 on the horizon.

12 (11) V-Rally

PSX/GB, Infogrames (budget)

Not a good month for rallying games, as V-Rally takes a dive, swiftly followed by...

13 (12) Colin McRae Rally

PSX/PC, Codemasters

After a spectacular fall last month, Colin's clinging on by his fingertips. It won't last.

14 (30) Hercules

PSX/PC, SCE (budget)

A huge climb for this Disney-based title, largely cos Santa bought it for all the kids.

15 (16) Tomb Raider II

PSX/PC, EIDOS

Lara-on-Lara action! TR II overtakes its prequel, but TR III is affecting sales fast.

16 (13) Tomb Raider

PSX/PC, EIDOS (budget)

Lara's first adventure slips down the chart now the third instalment is here.

17 (-) Half-Life

PC, Cendant

This shoot-'em-up par excellence hasn't done too badly at all, and it's the highest placed PC-only game.

18 (-) Apocalypse

PSX, Activision

Bruce Willis' appearance here obviously isn't as much of a pull as in the movies.

19 (22) Rayman

PSX/PC, Ubisoft (budget)

It's been creeping up for weeks, and now this sub-standard plat-fest's in the top 20.

20 (9) World Cup '98

PSX/PC/N64/GB, EA

The officially licensed game, plunging down the table faster than Peterborough.

21 (15) WWF: Warzone

PSX/N64/GB, Acclaim

22 (8) Premier Manager '98

PSX/PC, Gremlin

23 (14) 1080° Snowboarding

N64, Nintendo

24 (-) Mickey's Wild Adventure

PSX, SCE (budget)

25 (17) Croc

PSX/PC, SCE (budget)

26 (19) Die Hard Trilogy

PSX/PC, EA (budget)

27 (-) Worms

PSX/PC/GB, Infogrames

28 (-) Music

PSX, Codemasters

29 (-) Cool Boarders 3

PSX, SCE

30 (25) Gran Turismo

PSX, SCE

31 (21) Banjo-Kazooie

N64, Nintendo

32 (18) F1 World Grand Prix

N64, Nintendo

33 (20) Resident Evil

PSX/PC, Virgin (budget)

34 (34) Gameboy Gallery

GB, Nintendo

35 (-) Time Crisis

PSX, SCE (budget)

36 (28) Tekken 2

PSX, SCE (budget)

37 (27) Spiceworld

PSX, SCE (budget)

38 (3) Tenchu: Stealth Assassins

PSX, Activision

39 (23) F1 Formula 1

PSX/PC, Psygnosis (budget)

40 (39) Heart of Darkness

PSX/PC, Infogrames

CHARTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH CHART TRACK & ELSPA

PlayStation Top 10

- 1 (-) FIFA 99 EA Sports
 - 2 (-) Tomb Raider III EIDOS
 - 3 (1) Spyro the Dragon SCE
 - 4 (-) Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus GT
 - 5 (6) Tekken 3 SCE
 - 6 (2) TOCA Touring Car Championship Codemasters
 - 7 (-) TOCA 2 Touring Cars Codemasters
 - 8 (4) Formula 1 '98 Psygnosis
 - 9 (5) Crash Bandicoot SCE
 - 10 (9) V-Rally SCE
- Average footy controversially beats lovely Lara to the top spot. And look at F1 '98's fall.

PC Top 10

- 1 (-) Tomb Raider III EIDOS
 - 2 (-) Half-Life Sierra
 - 3 (-) FIFA 99 EA Sports
 - 4 (3) Combat Flight Simulator Microsoft
 - 5 (-) South Park Theme & Screensaver Telstar
 - 6 (-) Lego Creator Lego Media
 - 7 (10) Colin McRae Rally Codemasters
 - 8 (-) The Simpsons: Virtual Springfield Fox Interactive
 - 9 (-) Populous: The Beginning EA
 - 10 (8) Titanic – Adventure Out Of Time Europress
- New entries a-plenty. And look, Colin McRae moving back up.

N64 Top 10

- 1 (1) 1080° Snowboarding Nintendo
 - 2 (3) Banjo-Kazooie Nintendo
 - 3 (2) F1 World Grand Prix Nintendo
 - 4 (5) Super Mario 64 Nintendo
 - 5 (-) WCW vs NWO Revenge THQ
 - 6 (7) Mission: Impossible Ocean
 - 7 (6) GoldenEye 007 Nintendo
 - 8 (4) F-Zero X Nintendo
 - 9 (10) Mario Kart 64 Nintendo
 - 10 (-) WWF: Warzone Acclaim
- 1080° is still beaming down from the top slot, while THQ's lacklustre wrestling nonsense comes crashing in at five.

Import zone | With NextGen (0181 339 0666)



■ RR4 big on import for PlayStation.

The distant sound of hooves can only mean NextGen's Steve Lucas is riding up on his silver mule. "Wooahhh, there!" Hello, Steve. What's import sales have

been helping fill your wallet this month? "Ridge Racer 4 on the PSX is doing well, and I'm looking forward to Final Fantasy VIII." What about that Dreamcast thing?

"Yep, that's been selling okay." Only okay? "Well, if you don't like Virtua Fighter, you're not really going to want the console." Much else? "Damn Nintendo! It's made the US Zelda incompatible with UK consoles, so I can't sell it!" Tut. So what are you most looking forward to? "Sonic Adventure and Sega Rally 2 should help Dreamcast no end." Thanks, Steve. "Giddyup!"



Get your money back

Ten videogame machines that kept playing hard to get



■ Hands up anyone who's even remotely surprised that *Zelda's* at number one.

Japanese All-Format Top 10

- 1 (-) *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* N64, Nintendo
- 2 (-) *Dragon Quest Monsters* GB, Enix
- 3 (-) *Poporogue* PSX, SCEI
- 4 (-) *Virtua Fighter 3TB* DC, Sega
- 5 (-) *Libero Grande* PSX, Namco
- 6 (-) *Exodus Guilty* PSX, Imadio
- 7 (-) *Fighting Illusion K-1 Grand Prix '98* PSX, X-Ing
- 8 (3) *Pocket Monsters Pikachu* GB, Nintendo
- 9 (-) *Eurasia Express Murder Incident* PSX, Enix
- 10 (-) *Hepatica Flowers* PSX, SCEI

US Console Top 5

- 1 *NBA Live 99* PSX, EA
- 2 *Twisted Metal 3* PSX, SCEI
- 3 *Metal Gear Solid* PSX, Konami
- 4 *Crash 3* PSX, SCEI
- 5 *WCW vs NWO Revenge* N64, THQ

US PC Top 5

- 1 (1) *Deer Hunter II 3D* GT
- 2 (-) *Barbie Riding Club* Mattel
- 3 (-) *Lego Island* The Learning Company
- 4 (-) *Microsoft Combat Flight Simulator* Microsoft
- 5 (-) *Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2* Activision

US charts supplied by PC-Data

If you think waiting for Dreamcast is painful, spare a thought for the gamers who waited patiently (and not so patiently) for this lot. Delays, hold-ups and total cancellations meant that these machines were killed completely, or old-hat by the time that they arrived. So, the next time someone tells you they're eagerly awaiting the PlayStation 2 or Nintendo 2000, tell them not to hold their breath. They might just suffocate in the process.

1. Elan Enterprise

An astonishing year-and-a-half passed between announcement and release date for this machine. By 1985, it had changed its name three times; from the ill advised "Elan", to the stupid "Flan", to the ridiculous "Samurai", until finally settling on the rather misleading "Enterprise". Appropriately enough, by the time the Enterprise appeared it was as up-to-date and popular as William Shatner.

2. Game Boy Color

Nintendo's coloured version of its mono handheld was the subject of rumours as far back as 1990. Gamers chattered excitedly about the infinite potential for Game Boy games exploding with colour, but it would be eight years later before Nintendo relented and moved on from monochrome. Launch games: *Color Tetris* and *Game & Watch Collection*. Worth the wait, then.

3. Sinclair QL

After the success of the calculator-keyed ZX Spectrum, Sir Clive announced the more serious 16-bit QL in January 1984. Four months of cashed cheques later, he delivered it. The inclusion of a small box which held all the bits

■ If anyone ever asks you why the QL failed, show them this.



■ The old Amiga 1200 and its funny-looking friend.

that wouldn't fit in the QL's casing was a touching testament to the machine's crapness.

4. Nintendo 64

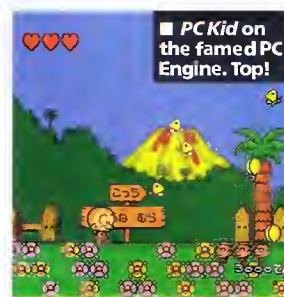
The Big N's policy during the N64's development was a bit odd. One: reveal tantalising glimpse of machine and sublime *Super Mario 64* game. Two: go into sulk and refuse to talk about anything at all to do with N64. Three: push back release date until everyone has a PlayStation. Four: produce finished machine two years late and cry when not enough people buy it.

5. Konix Multi-System

Joystick manufacturer Konix overreached itself slightly with plans for this super-console. Promised add-ons included a motorcycle handlebar and, amazingly, a plug-in hydraulic chair. A lack of ideas, support and decent games saw it touched by Death soon after. Later, however, it resurfaced as the Atari Jaguar, which suffered from a lack of ideas, support and decent games (and so on).

6. PlayStation 2

Ever since Sony's PlayStation took control of the divided world, ridiculous rumours of PlayStation 2 just won't stop coming. Since last year, they've gone into overdrive, taking in the "inevitable" Tokyo



9. PC Engine

Brilliant arcade-perfect conversions! Drop-dead gorgeous graphics! Every top developer producing games for it! Just some of the reasons why the PC Engine was too good for Europe. Manufacturers NEC even went as far as to publish magazine adverts, warning anyone who bought an illegal import machine that they would fall foul of the wrath of some ancient Oriental cause. We think.

10. Sam Coupe

Another Super-Spectrum that died a particularly horrible death. Literally thousands were eagerly awaiting this improved Spectrum done, but when it turned up bugged to high heaven and looking like something you'd prop your bedroom door open with, it lost fans faster than Gary Glitter.

Top 10 porn game titles

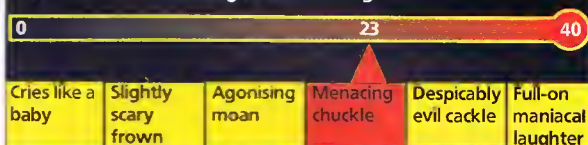
1. *Lace Invaders*
2. *NBA Live Sex Show '98*
3. *Sid Meier's Getting It!*
4. *Wild 69*
5. *Womb Raider*
6. *Super Mario 64 Women in One Night*
7. *Diddy Kong Racy*
8. *XXX-wing vs Thai prostitute*
9. *Kensai Sacred Fisting*
10. *Treasures of the Deep*

Chart Analysis By Mr Evil

■ Bwa-ha-ha-ha-haaaa! Hello everybody. My name's Mr Evil. It's my job to assess how far THE DESPICABLE FORCES OF EVIL have penetrated the games chart. This month, readings from my Evil-o-meter™ enable me to chuckle menacingly as I realise that over half of this month's games feature gratuitous killing, maiming or wounding of some horrible description. Result! Ha-ha-haaaa. I am so very evil.



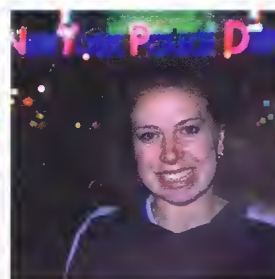
Evil-o-meter™: number of games containing evil this month



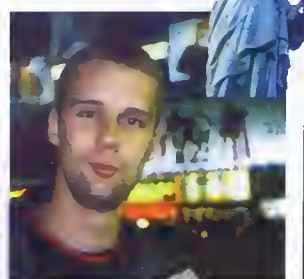
Vox-pop What are New York's gamers like?



■ Yo, yo, daddy-o. "Hello. I'm Jon." Someone asked us if we wanted our egg 'sunny side up' today. Eh? "That means fried. 'Over easy' means not cooked both sides." Oh, right. Like games? "Yes, I want *Zelda*, but it's sold out." NY Toys-"9"-Us is huge, isn't it? "Dy'reckon?" Yes. Cheers!



■ "Hi, I'm Cathy." Hi. Cool Police Department. Not like England. "I've been to England." Did you like it? "Yes." Like games? "Not really - I like that shooting one." *Time Crisis*? "Yes." You can get that on the PlayStation, you know. [Nonplussed.] "Oh. Right. Bye."



■ Hello. Like games? "*Tomb Raider III*. Have you seen the ad?" What ad? "Round here." [Takes us round corner. Points to biggest picture of Lara you've ever seen.] Blimey, Charlie. America, eh? Who was it again? "Mike." Cheers, Mike. Oh, and have a nice day. "Er, yeah."

PHOTOGRAPHY: KOBAL COLLECTION

Release Schedule

Waiting for a specific game? It'll get here eventually. Here's our best guess when...

January

8th	RC Stunt Copter	Interplay	PSX
8th	Tai Fu	Activision	PSX
8th	Curse Of Monkey Island	LucasArts	PC
8th	Jedi Knight: The Mysteries Of The Sith	LucasArts	PC
8th	Outlaws	LucasArts	PC
8th	Shadows of the Empire Classic	LucasArts	PC
8th	Star Wars Compilation	LucasArts	PC
8th	Star Wars Supremacy	LucasArts	PC
8th	WipEout 64	Midway	N64
8th	Gex	GT	CGB
8th	Mortal Kombat 4	Midway	CGB
8th	Pocket Tales Conker	Rare	CGB

15th	Global domination	Psygnosis	PSX
15th	Max Power Racing	Infogrames	PSX
15th	PFA Soccer	EIDOS	PSX
15th	Deth Karz	Infogrames	PC
15th	Saga	Cryo	PC
15th	Speedbusters	Ubisoft	PC
15th	Rush 2: Extreme Racing USA	Midway	N64
15th	Cool Hand	Take 2	CGB
15th	Montezuma's Return	Take 2	CGB
15th	NBA Jam '99	Acclaim	CGB
15th	NFL Blitz	Midway	CGB
15th	Pinball	Take 2	CGB
15th	Rampage World Tour	Midway	CGB
15th	Reservoir Rat	Take 2	CGB

22nd	Player Manager 2	Anco	PSX
22nd	Premier Manager '99	Gremlin	PSX
22nd	Sensible Soccer: Club Edition	Warner	PSX
22nd	Soul Blade	Sony Platinum	PSX
22nd	Rogue Squadron	Nintendo	N64
22nd	Virtual Pool	Crave	N64
22nd	Men In Black	Infogrames	CGB
22nd	Pitfall	Take 2	CGB
22nd	Tennis 2	Nintendo	CGB
22nd	Wario Land 2	Nintendo	CGB
22nd	Zelda	Nintendo	CGB

29th	Pro 18: World Tour Golf	Psygnosis	PC
29th	Twisted Edge Snowboarding	Midway	N64
29th	Bugs & Lola	Infogrames	CGB

TBA	Devil Dice	Sony	PSX
TBA	Dreams	Cryo	PSX
TBA	NFL Extreme	Sony	PSX
TBA	Pro Boards	Sony	PSX
TBA	Wild Arms	Sony	PSX
TBA	Monkey Hero	Take 2	PSX
TBA	Actua Golf 2 Premier Collection	Gremlin	PC
TBA	Actua Soccer 2 Premier Collection	Gremlin	PC

TBA	Biosys	Take 2	PC
TBA	Civilization 2	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Dalkatana	EIDOS	PC
TBA	Dragonflight	Grolier	PC
TBA	F-16 Aggressor	Virgin	PC
TBA	Flight Unlimited 2 Premier Collection	EIDOS	PC
TBA	Great Britain 3	Take 2	PC
TBA	Homeworld	Cendant	PC
TBA	Hype the Time Quest	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Liath	Project 2	PC
TBA	May Day!!	Take 2	PC
TBA	Rocky Horror Picture Show	Black Friar	PC
TBA	Roggahub	Grolier	PC
TBA	Shadowpack	Blue-Byte	PC
TBA	Tank Racer	Grolier	PC
TBA	The Real Neverending Story	Discreet	PC
TBA	Thrust Twist and Turn	Take 2	PC
TBA	Turok 2	Acclaim	PC
TBA	Unreal Level Pack	GT	PC
TBA	Viva Football	Virgin	PC
TBA	Worms Armageddon	Team 17	PC
TBA	All Star Tennis '99	Ubisoft	N64
TBA	Mud Monsters	Take 2	N64
TBA	Star Wars: Rogue Squadron	LucasArts	N64

February

5th	Akuji the Heartless	EIDOS	PSX
5th	A Bug's Life	Sony	PSX
5th	A Bug's Life	Disney	PC
5th	Delta Force	Novalogic	PC
5th	Starcraft Battle Chest	Cendant	PC
5th	Caesar's Palace	Nintendo	CGB
5th	Wicked Surfing	Nintendo	CGB
12th	WCW Thunder	THQ	PSX
19th	Lion King 2	Disney	PC
26th	Metal Gear Solid	Konami	PSX

TBA	Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay	PSX
TBA	Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine	LucasArts	PSX
TBA	Joe Blow	Telstar	PSX
TBA	Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver	EIDOS	PSX
TBA	Monaco Grand Prix Racing Sim	Ubisoft	PSX
TBA	No Fear Downhill	Codemasters	PSX
TBA	Mountain Biking	Sony	PSX
TBA	Running Wild	Activision	PSX
TBA	Space Invaders	Sony	PSX
TBA	The Gran Stream Saga	Sony	PSX
TBA	Tribal	Sony	PSX
TBA	Viva Football	Virgin	PSX
TBA	Alien vs Predator	EA/Fox	PC
TBA	Alpha Centauri	EA	PC
TBA	Baja 1000 Racing	Brøderbund	PC
TBA	Brian Lara Cricket	Codemasters	PC

TBA	Championship Manager 3	EIDOS	PC
TBA	Civilization: Call To Power	Activision	PC
TBA	Command & Conquer 2	EA	PC
TBA	Diablo 2	Cendant	PC
TBA	Drakan	Psygnosis	PC
TBA	Duke Nukem 4ever	GT	PC
TBA	Dungeon Keeper 2	EA	PC
TBA	Extreme Warfare	Brøderbund	PC
TBA	Force Commander	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Heavy Gear 2	Activision	PC
TBA	Lands of Lore 3	Westwood	PC
TBA	Machines	Acclaim	PC
TBA	Malkari	Interactive Magic	PC
TBA	Messiah	Interplay	PC
TBA	No Fear Downhill	Codemasters	PC
TBA	Mountain Biking	EIDOS	PC
TBA	Omikron	Infogrames	PC
TBA	Outcast	EA	PC
TBA	Prax Wars	Gremlin	PC
TBA	Premier Manager '99	Codemasters	PC
TBA	Prince Naseem Boxing	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Reel Feel Golf	EIDOS	PC
TBA	Revenant	EA	PC
TBA	Sim City 3000	Acclaim	PC
TBA	South Park	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Star Trek: First Contact	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Star Wars: Force Commander	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Star Wars: X-Wing Alliance	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Starship Troopers	Virgin	PC
TBA	Superbikes World	Cryo	PC
TBA	Championship	Codemasters	PC
TBA	The Guardian	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	TOCA Touring Car 2	GT	PC
TBA	Tonic Trouble	EA	PC
TBA	Total Annihilation: Kingdoms	GT	PC
TBA	Ultima Ascension	GT	PC
TBA	Unreal Level Editor	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Uprising 2: Lead & Destroy	EIDOS	PC
TBA	Warzone 2100	THQ	PC
TBA	WCW Nitro	Interplay	N64
TBA	Earthworm Jim 3D	GT	N64
TBA	Gex 64	Codemasters	N64
TBA	Micro Machines 64	Ubisoft	N64
TBA	Monaco Grand Prix Racing Sim	Acclaim	N64
TBA	South Park	Ubisoft	N64
TBA	Tonic Trouble	Infogrames	CGB
TBA	Asterix		

TBA	Star Trek: First Contact	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Star Wars: Force Commander	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Star Wars: X-Wing Alliance	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Starship Troopers	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Superbikes World	Virgin	PC
TBA	Championship	Cryo	PC
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TBA	Monaco Grand Prix Racing Sim	Acclaim	N64
TBA	South Park	Ubisoft	N64
TBA	Tonic Trouble	Infogrames	CGB
TBA	Asterix		

February

5th	Rollcage	Psygnosis	PSX
12th	Pro 18: World Tour Golf	Psygnosis	PSX
12th	Half-Life: Team Fortress	Sierra	PC
12th	Starsiege Tribes	Cendant	PC

■ RELEASE SCHEDULE IN ASSOCIATION WITH HMV



Most wanted

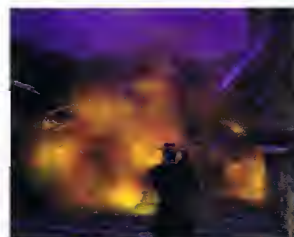
Write and tell us what you're looking forward to playing in '99



Driver
Reflections,
PlayStation/PC
■ "From the team that brought you the sublime arcade-racing thrills of Destruction Derby 2, this driving game marries the cop-dodging missions of Grand Theft Auto with ultra-realistic car mechanics. I can't wait!"
Gary Lamb, Oldham



Point Blank 2
Namco, PSX
■ "The original light-gun extravaganza had me blasting until my eyes packed up. The news of a sequel, complete with an eight-player party mode, has forced me to delete 'Get more sleep' from my list of New Year's Resolutions."
Greg Jones, via email



Duke Nukem: Zero Hour
GT Interactive, N64
■ "I like my games in bad taste and Duke's just the guy to deliver what I want. Featuring a Tomb-Raider-style third-person view and loads of things to kill my N64's slot is moistening with anticipation already."
Mark Smart, Edinburgh

March

12th	Duke Nukem: Zero Hour	GT	N64
12th	Bugs Bunny: Crazy Castles 3	Nintendo	CGB
12th	Shadowgate	Viacom	CGB
TBA	Alien Resurrection	EA/Fox	PSX
TBA	Driver	TBA	PSX
TBA	Quake II	Activision	PSX
TBA	Rainbow Six	Take 2	PSX
TBA	Rayman 2	Ubisoft	PSX
TBA	R4: Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco	PSX
TBA	Unification	Telstar	PSX
TBA	Age of Empires 2: Age of Kings	Microsoft	PC
TBA	Close Combat 3	Microsoft	PC
TBA	Flyers	Take 2	PC
TBA	Heroes of Might & Magic III	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Interstate '82	Activision	PC
TBA	Jack Nicklaus: Golden Bear Challenge	Accolade	PC
TBA	Jimmy White 2 - Cue Ball	Infogrames	PC
TBA	Joe Blow	Telstar	PC
TBA	MechWarrior 3	MicroProse	PC
TBA	ODT	Psygnosis	PC
TBA	Prey	GT	PC
TBA	Prince of Persia 3D	Bröderbund	PC
TBA	Rayman 2	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Requiem	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Slave Zero	Accolade	PC
TBA	Solar	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Star Trek: Birth of the Federation	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Third World	Activision	PC
TBA	Ultima Online: Second Age	Origin	PC
TBA	FIFA 99	EA	N64
TBA	Quake II	Activision	N64
TBA	Rayman 2	Ubisoft	N64
TBA	Three Lions	Take 2	CGB

April

23	Gabriel Knight Anthology	Cendant	PC
TBA	Prince Naseem Boxing	Codemasters	PSX
TBA	X-Files The Game	Fox Interactive	PSX
TBA	X-Men	Activision	PSX
TBA	3 Sixty	Cryo	PSX
TBA	3 Sixty	Cryo	PC
TBA	Beneath	Activision	PC
TBA	Black & White	EA	PC
TBA	Legend of the Black Moon	Cryo	PC
TBA	Black Moon Chronicles	Cryo	PC
TBA	D Jump	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Descent 3	Interplay	PC
TBA	Giants	Interplay	PC
TBA	Kanaan	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Battlezone 2	Activision	PC
TBA	Republic	Cryo	PC
TBA	Return Fire 2	Ripcord	PC
TBA	Shadowman	Acclaim	PC
TBA	3 Sixty	Cryo	N64



■ No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking: A downhill mountain biking game with absolutely no fear.

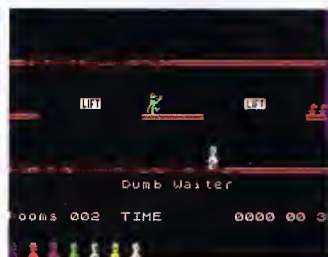
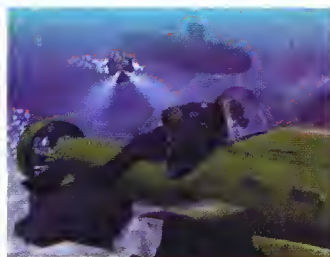
Q&A

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Whatever you want to know about – even if that does include submarines – Mark Green is here to help.



■ Resident Evil, Treasures of the Deep and a Jet Set Willy correction for all you pedants out there...

Q I have a question for you. Will Resident Evil 2 ever come out on the PC?
Jason Short, Birmingham

A It's your lucky day. Glance across at the Release Schedule and you'll notice that Capcom's zombie fest is due for release on the PC in March. The conversion, to be published by Virgin, will feature a super-difficult Extreme Battle bonus mode, and a Gallery section, with pictures and sketches from the game's development.

Q Why are there no good submarine games for the PlayStation? The PC is swimming in 'em.

Russ Williams, Rotherham

A Yes, in their haste to bring you classics such as R4 and Metal Gear Solid, developers for the PlayStation have callously ignored the mainstream demand for underwater tin-can epics. Lucky for you, then, that Namco has tapped into the public psyche and released *Treasures of the Deep*, which offers limited but varied fun as you guide your

little underwater pod to find treasure and rescue scientists. True, the vehicle isn't actually a submarine, but it's close enough for me not to care. If that doesn't tickle your fancy, try that odd submarine sub-game (no pun intended) in *Final Fantasy VII*. Apart from that, you're bugged. The perfect opportunity to go out and do something more interesting instead, I would have thought.

Q Why, in issue one's Q&A, did you write "don't hold your breath for Jet Set Willy 2?" Jet Set Willy 2 already exists, it came out for the Spectrum in yadda, yadda, etc.
Nicky Adams, Middlesex and many others

A Yes, thanks. I'll attempt to get round this using the excuse that Matthew Smith didn't program *Jet Set Willy 2*, so I meant "don't hold your breath for a proper Smith-written sequel to JSW". Congrats to those people who noticed the "mistake". By the way, nit-pickers, the A-list entry for *Triple Play '99* on the PC said that EA had done "a fine job of translating it for the PSX". But don't write in, because I've already changed it. Ha! **A**

Whatever happened to...? | Superstars of gaming's past tracked down

Jeff Minter

■ **Claim to fame:** Jeff is a gaming legend. If you've ever stumbled across a game starring a sheep, or a llama, or a camel, then it's a fair

bet that it was programmed by this man. Working mainly on the VIC-20 and C64, Jeff's company Llamasoft was responsible for some of the '80s best shoot-'em-ups.

After *Revenge Of The Mutant Camels* and *Iridis Alpha*, he upped and left the Commodore games scene, before resurfacing with some better stuff for the ill-fated Atari Jaguar console. Given the license to update his favourite Atari classics, he set about producing some first-class "2000" updates of *Tempest* and *Defender*.

Then, following the unfortunate demise of both the Jaguar and the Atari

itself, Jeff disappeared as quickly as he'd arrived...

■ **So, where is he?** Working as part of the VM Labs team, now dedicated to bringing the Nuon console to the masses. (We know you haven't heard of it, but that'll be rectified soon.) The Nuon is games-playing circuitry wired inside a DVD player, giving immediate access to games. Jeff's excited about it. "Imagine that for a couple of years all the VCRs that have been made have a [Nuon] chip. So it kind of sneaks into people's houses."

Jeff is also working on software for the machine, including a sound-to-light generator and the eagerly-anticipated *Tempest 3000*. If you want to find out how he's getting on, or take a gander at his assorted farmyard animals, you can visit his Web site (<http://www.magicnet.net/yak/gnus.htm>). Remember, he might be weird, but then all geniuses are.

■ Thanks to PC Format.



■ What's the name of your goat, Jeff? "Ali." Nice horns. "Thanks".

WHO THE HELL IS SHIGERU MIYAMOTO?


STORY BY JONATHAN DAVIES

HE'S THE BLOKE WHO CREATED ZELDA 64. HE CREATED MARIO 64, TOO. HE'S BEEN DUBBED THE "WILLY WONKA" OF NINTENDO AND THE "STEVEN SPIELBERG OF VIDEOGAMES." HIS PEERS SIMPLY CALL HIM "THE MASTER." HE'S THE GREATEST GAMES CREATOR IN THE WORLD. YET HE DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS JUST A QUIET, MIDDLE-AGED MAN. SOMEBODY'S NOT TELLING THE TRUTH...

■ PHOTOGRAPHY: JUDE EDGINTON


■ *Zelda 64* is the greatest videogame of all time. And that's official. It's in shops now.





**"I love making
videogames. When I
am creating I am a
child. I create the
game for me. It is my
play ground."**

Shigeru Miyamoto 



"If I couldn't make videogames? I would be a comic book artist."

Shigeru Miyamoto

45 classic Miyamoto Moments...

Miyamoto's output reads like a "Videogaming's Greatest Hits" compilation. The following list isn't comprehensive (there are no Game & Watch or Virtual Boy titles) but there's more than enough to make his rivals weep.

(1) Donkey Kong

■ Arcade ■ 1981

■ Miyamoto wanted to name this game after its "stubborn monkey" villain. One of his favourite films is *King Kong*, and Nintendo's Japanese-to-English dictionary (subsequently thrown away and replaced) suggested "donkey" as a translation of "stubborn". Hence the name. The game was a true original (boy meets girl, girl is snatched by gorilla, gorilla throws barrels at boy) and owed nothing

to anything else in the arcades of the day. Of all Miyamoto's characters, his favourite remains Donkey Kong. The expression on the hairy fella's face when you topple his tower is classic Shigs. ★★★★★

(2) Donkey Kong Jr

■ Arcade ■ 1982

■ One year old and Mario had already gone off the rails. He'd locked Kong in a cage and it was up to Kong Jr to rescue his dad. Introduced rope-climbing

and, strangely, Bach to the arcades. ★★★★★

(3) Mario Bros.

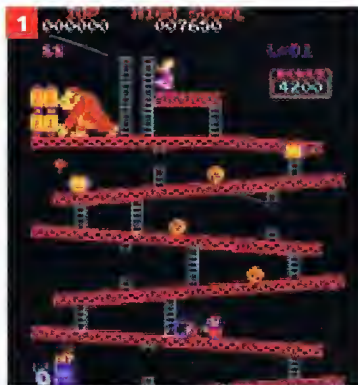
■ Arcade ■ 1983

■ Screen-by-screen platformer that spawned a trillion imitations. ★★★★★

(4) Donkey Kong 3

■ Arcade ■ 1983

■ Er, a case of squirting Donkey Kong up the bottom with an insect spray, while trying to prevent bugs from stealing your flowers. No, honestly. ★★★★★





■ All epoch-making stars are happy on camera. Discuss.

If you've ever been shot up the bum by a Red Shell, or landed on by a Koopa Paratrooper, or stalked by a Boo, or inhaled by Andross, or had your rear set on fire while taking a stroll as a small Italian plumber, you'll have done two things: first, you'll have said, "Bother!" (or possibly "Confound it!"). Second, after calming down a bit, you'll have raised a toast to the genius of Nintendo – and, if you pay attention to the credits at the ends of your games – to the genius of Mr Shigeru Miyamoto. But who exactly is this man? And where did he come from?

In 1977, Shigeru Miyamoto was a 24-year old student studying industrial design at Kanazawa Municipal Arts and Crafts College in Kyoto, Japan.

By 1998, Shigeru Miyamoto had sold a quarter of a billion game cartridges across the globe and made Nintendo the most successful videogames company in the world.

His first console game, *Super Mario Bros.*, sold over 50 million copies world-wide. By comparison, the best selling album of all time, Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, sold around 47 million copies. Even before a single review had been published, Miyamoto's latest game, *Zelda 64*, had taken more than 325,000 orders in America – with cash deposits. *Zelda 64* was easily the biggest-selling videogame of 1998 in the United States, despite only having been on sale for the final 39 days of the year.

Miyamoto has won admirers among the most powerful men in the entertainment industry. George Lucas, Steven Spielberg and Paul McCartney have all made pilgrimages to Kyoto to meet him. Robin Williams named his daughter Zelda after having been so

enchanted by Miyamoto's NES game. In 1996, *Time* magazine ran an article about him titled "The Spielberg of Video Games". He's universally admired within the games industry, too. There's not a designer in the world who wouldn't playfully ruffle his hair given the chance. *Doom* and *Quake* designer, John Romero, named the star of his latest game (*Daikatana*), Hiro Miyamoto, after – you guessed it – his hero, Shigeru Miyamoto.

Without Miyamoto we'd most likely have no Nintendo. At the end of the 1970s his *Donkey Kong* and *Mario* games revived the flagging, two-bit toy company and set it on the

Paul McCartney and Steven Spielberg have both made pilgrimages to meet him.

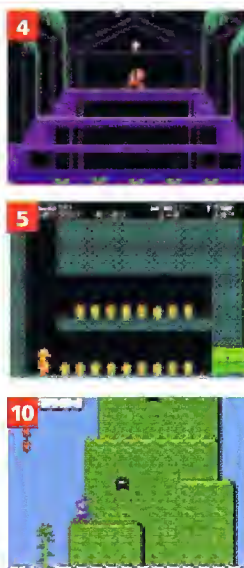
path to greatness. Without Nintendo we'd probably have no Sega nor PlayStation as it was Nintendo that single-handedly ignited the console boom in the mid-1980s. And without Sega and the PlayStation we'd, er... well, it would be awful.

In short, Shigeru Miyamoto is a star. He's created so many fantastic games that it's virtually impossible to pick a favourite. Go on – what's yours? *Super Mario 64*, surely? What about *Super Mario Bros 3*? No, no. *Zelda* on the SNES? No. *Mario Kart*? *Starfox*? *F-Zero*?

It's just not a fair question. While putting together this article we asked a variety of game designers to name their favourite moments from their favourite Miyamoto games. Most tied themselves up in knots trying to decide on an answer. Every Miyamoto title has raised the gaming stakes. With *Donkey Kong* he invented not just the platform



■ Fox McCloud star of *Starfox* and *Lylat Wars*. What a guy.



(5) Super Mario Bros

■ NES ■ 1985
■ This was the game that kicked down your front door and thrust Nintendo into your life. Starring not only Mario but the upgradable Super Mario, it set the template for the biggest-selling game of all time (*Super Mario Bros 3*) and the best game of all time (*Super Mario 64*). It sold over 50 million, despite every world ending with Toad saying "Thank you Mario! But our princess is in another castle!" ★★★★★

(6) Donkey Kong

■ NES ■ 1985
■ *Donkey Kong* – but on the NES. There's nothing more to say. ★★★★★

(7) Donkey Kong Jr

■ NES ■ 1986
■ *Donkey Kong Jr* – but on the NES. ★★★★★

(8) Donkey Kong 3

■ NES ■ 1986
■ *Donkey Kong 3* – but on the NES. ★★★★★

(9) The Legend of Zelda

■ NES ■ 1986
■ Action, adventure, treasure, monsters, secret caves, sword-fighting, bombs... Of all Miyamoto's games, the original *Zelda* has probably aged most visibly, but it's still great to play, and very tough. There'd been role-playing games before, but *Zelda* made them accessible and fun. ★★★★★

(10) Super Mario Bros 2

■ NES ■ 1988
■ With its curious "silent movie" presentation, and temporary abandonment of *Mario* gameplay conventions (such as the collect-100-coins-for-an-extra-life idea) this was a bit of a cul-de-sac off of the *Super Mario* highway. Erm, or something. It was released only for the American market and, in essence, was a conversion of a Japanese game called *Doki Doki Panic*. The twist was that all of the original characters were replaced by the *Mario* clan. None the worse for that, though – you could play as Mario, Luigi, Princess or, superbly, Toad. ★★★★★



■ As Mickey Mouse was to the first part of the century, so Mario is to the second.

game but game characters – everyone else at the time was content with blocky, abstract spaceships, squares and blobs. Eleven years later, the first glimpse of *Super Mario 64* reduced rival developers to tears.

The esteem in which Miyamoto's games are held does have its downside. Ten *Super Mario* platform games might themselves seem a lot, but for each Miyamoto original there are hundreds, even thousands of "tributes" (OK, "copycat rip-offs"). We gamers get hosed down with marketing for this dross, and sooner or later we give in to it. But very few games inspired by Miyamoto's creations have ever lived up to the originals. It's obvious that the designers just don't "get it". Look at *Bubsy the Bobcat*. I mean, really.

The trick is that it's not enough simply to invent a loveable cartoon character ("Hey! It's Alex the Alligator!" or "Say hi to Terry the Tapeworm!" or "Yo! Barry the Baseball Cap Kid!"), throw together some platforms, scatter them with baddies, and award an extra life for collecting a hundred coins. As Miyamoto himself has said: "Unfortunately, often our competitors simply try to imitate the surface and end up making very badly balanced games. They never understand why and how we've done what we've done."

Some designers, however, do bother looking beneath the surface. And what they find is a rich source of gaming wisdom. The best designers do understand "why and how" and, rather than simply trying to make something that looks like a *Mario* game, they'll make their own game using their own ideas but making sure it meets the standards established by Miyamoto. Indeed, sometimes you'll see Miyamoto's influence springing up in games that couldn't be further removed from the cheery world of Bowser and Yoshi.

"We were playing a great deal of *Super Mario 64* when we were designing *Half-Life*," says Gabe Newell of Valve, "and it affected some of our decisions, probably both consciously and unconsciously. We spent a lot of time trying to figure out how he and his team were able to build spaces that were fun for a wide range of player abilities, as well as his approaches to both the physical navigation of the space and the logical resolution of the puzzles. Of course, the way we do long jumping in *Half-Life* is exactly the same as the long jumping in *Mario 64*."

The Miyamoto influence can also be felt in, of all places, *Doom*. "Even though we both have a different style, the basics are still there," says John Romero. "The importance of a simple user interface for gameplay, allowing lots of exploration in your environments, proper feedback for all actions and outcomes... I've learned the low-level, fundamental things from playing Miyamoto's games over the years."

For all the success of Miyamoto's games, though, it's only through playing those games that we really know him. We don't know much about the man himself. He appears at press conferences from time to time, and eagerly answers questions about his games – fielding kicks from his

Miyamoto Moments (continued)

(11) *Zelda II: The Adventure of Link* ■ NES ■ 1988

■ A similar departure as *Bros 2*. Same theme as the first *Zelda*, and just as enjoyable, but with a curious blend of bird's-eye and from-the-side views. We think perhaps The Shigster™ may have been going through a funny patch – possibly playing too much banjo. ★★★★★

(12) *Donkey Kong Classics* ■ NES ■ 1989

■ *Donkey Kong* and *Donkey Kong Jr* crammed into one cart. Hopefully we'll see more like this from Nintendo. ★★★★★

(13) *Super Mario Land* ■ Game Boy ■ 1989

■ *Mario* in pocket form. It's the same formula that made the NES *Bros* games such winners, although, on the Game Boy's tiny, blur-prone screen, fearsomely tricky. ★★★★★

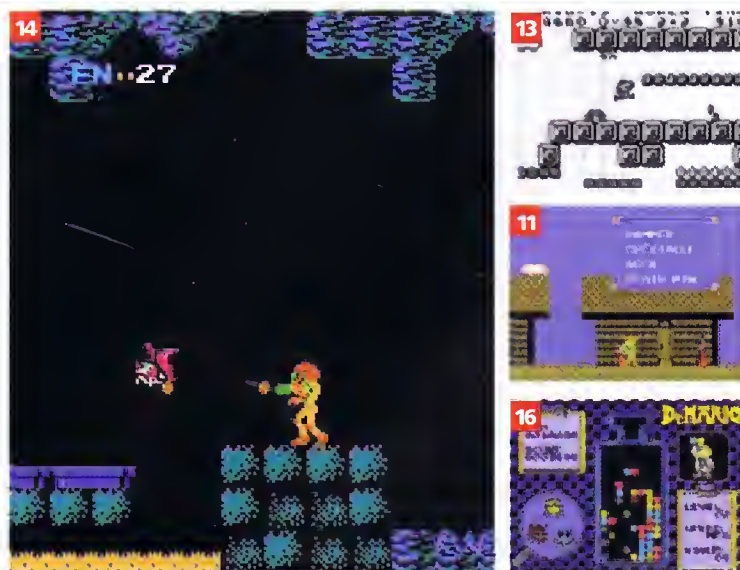
(14) *Metroid* ■ NES ■ 1989

Who says Nintendo only does cute? This gritty, hard-edged (well, firm-edged) space shoot-'em-up, seemingly stars a naked man who can roll up into a ball at the press of a button. He even has a gun. *Metroid* sank in Japan, where it was only released on floppy disk,

but was huge elsewhere. Especially when it was discovered that "he" was, in fact, a "she." ★★★★★

(15) *Super Mario Bros 3* ■ NES ■ 1990

■ The best-selling videogame of all time, and the true sequel to the original *Bros*. Miyamoto had spent five years dreaming up amazing new ideas to flesh out the *Super Mario* story. There's a superb map for each world, enabling you to revisit each level. The levels are stuffed with secret tunnels and bonus games. There's the raccoon tail, allowing Mario to glide incredible distances. There



PR manager when he starts revealing too much. He's got a sort of floppy Beatles' haircut. He wears a suit (with a *Starfox* tie if he's feeling a bit racy). He's always incredibly polite and nice to people who meet him. He works long hours at Nintendo, and then cycles home to play *Mario Kart 64* with his two kids.

What he doesn't do is behave like the superstar he could claim to be. There are no interviews in glossy magazines with pictures of him stripped down to the waist, staring at us through sunglasses. There's no sleeping in oxygen tents with monkeys, no saving the rain forests, no drug-fuelled poolside parties. He's happy to stick with "Mr Miyamoto" – no abbreviating it to "Shigeru," or "The game designer formally known as..." There's no body piercing, no books full of naked photos of himself, no nose job.

Or maybe there is. You see, we just don't know.

One of Shigeru Miyamoto's biggest fans is Alex Garden, boss of Relic, the company currently putting the finishing touches to *Homeworld* for the PC. But Alex finds Miyamoto as mysterious as the rest of us do.

That, he reckons, is part of the appeal. "He's an enigma in the North American and European videogaming press," Alex says. "We know so much about his games, but we know very little about the man himself. This is unusual when we're used to having widespread media coverage of our famous icons, and we're naturally curious."

Too right we are. So, in a *Citizen Kane*-like manner, let's examine the evidence and from what we can collect together, try to develop a set of theories that seek to explain how Miyamoto ticks. Maybe there'll be some truth in them, maybe every one will be wrong. We can only try to separate the reality from the myth.

How then, did Miyamoto become the world's best game designer?

THEORY 1: SHIGERU MIYAMOTO IS A GAME CHARACTER

No, really. When asked where he gets his ideas from, Miyamoto describes a childhood spent exploring the Kansai countryside around his home. He says he enjoyed chancing upon "secret" caves and hidden pathways through the woods. Much the same, in fact, as Mario's outings.

If you've played *Duke Nukem 3D* or *Half-Life* on the PC, you'll have had hours of fun attaching laser-tripped bombs at ankle-height across doorways and then running around the corner to await the results. Miyamoto was doing similar things 30 years ago. "I used to set traps on the door to my room when I left for school," he explained to one interviewer. "My mother was always surprised by them when she opened the door." Bet she was. Still, a small boy can be forgiven for harbouring game-character fantasies. At least Miyamoto's grown up and moved on now. Hasn't he?

"When I visit a new town, I like to walk alone at night, exploring the back streets and hidden places," he said recently. "Only when I know my way around a little will I buy a map." *Zelda* veterans will note that Link only finds the dungeon maps after he's spent some time exploring.

"I'm a quiet, middle-aged man," Miyamoto assures the world – but not entirely convincingly.

THEORY 2: HE'S NOT – IT'S ALL A BIG ACCIDENT

Back in 1977, Miyamoto was invited for an interview at Nintendo not because he'd dazzled them with his game-designing prowess, or knocked them out with the "hobbies" section of his CV (banjo-playing and setting traps for Mrs

Miyamoto), but because his dad was mates with the company's president, Hiroshi Yamauchi.

What are the odds of that? What if Old Man Miyamoto had faced the president of Nissan across the *Go* table, or shared a hot tub with the CEO of Pokari Sweat Beverages? How come *our* dad's don't know the president of Nintendo?

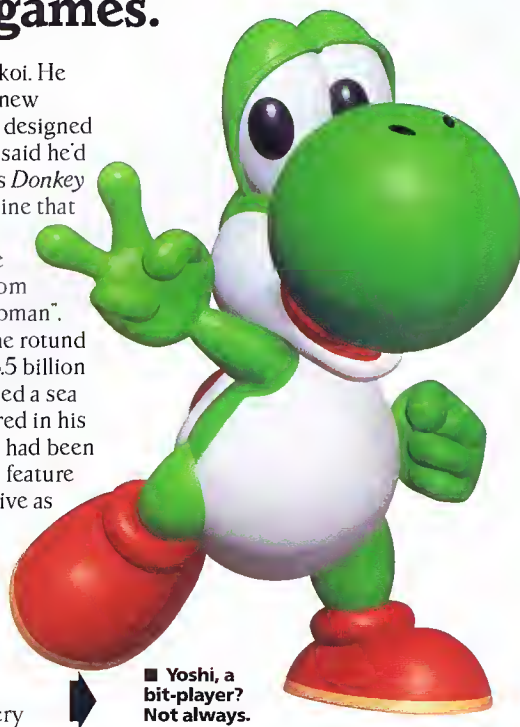
After a chat with Yamauchi, Miyamoto was offered the post of company artist. Nintendo didn't particularly need a company artist, but Miyamoto fell into the position anyway. Then, in 1980 with Nintendo's coin-op business struggling, Yamauchi picked Miyamoto, seemingly at random, and paired him up with a hardware

It just never seems to occur to Miyamoto to look at other designers' games.

designer called Gumpei Yokoi. He asked the duo to develop a new game. Miyamoto had never designed a videogame before, but he said he'd give it a stab. The result was *Donkey Kong*, a revolutionary machine that became an immediate hit.

Mario, though. Surely he can be no accident. Born from a Miyamoto sketch as "Jumpman", the hero of *Donkey Kong*, the rotund plumber had chalked up £3.5 billion in sales by 1996, had spawned a sea of merchandise, had appeared in his own TV cartoon series, and had been played by Bob Hoskins in a feature film. A character as distinctive as that doesn't come about by chance. Does he?

"He wears dungarees because that way you can see his arms move," confesses Miyamoto. Back when Mario was designed, graphics technology was very



Yoshi, a bit-player? Not always.



are dozens of new friends and enemies to meet and techniques to learn. And, best of all, it's absolutely huge. ★★★★★

(16) Dr Mario

■ Game Boy/NES ■ 1990
■ A puzzly *Tetris/Columns* variant in which a lab-coated Mario has to rid the screen of scowling viruses. Not immediately "Miyamoto" (it seems all early '90s nowadays) but diverting enough. ★★★★★



(17) Super Mario World

■ SNES ■ 1991
■ Three years in the making, this was the game that launched the SNES. It didn't showcase Nintendo's new hardware in the same

way as *Super Mario 64* later would, but in practice it proved to be Miyamoto's best yet. After all, you can't knock being able to ride Yoshi around – while wearing a cape. ★★★★★

(18) Metroid II: Return of Samus

■ Game Boy ■ 1991
■ Our naturist chum romps again. ★★★★★

(19) Pilotwings

■ SNES ■ 1991
■ The SNES has not six graphics modes but seven. The last allows a background to be displayed in pseudo-3D perspective and Miyamoto isn't afraid to use it. The result is a flight sim with graphics of impossible smoothness and

it's packed with Miyamoto touches (including the all-important penguins) and one of the games he's proudest of. ★★★★★

(20) F-Zero

■ SNES ■ 1991
■ Along with *Pilotwings*, an advert for the SNES's clever graphics, this time using them to whisk futuristic racetracks along beneath your hover car at cheek-flapping speed. The most exciting, most knuckle-gnawing racing this side of Walthamstov. ★★★★★

(21) The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past

■ SNES ■ 1992
■ The game *Zelda* fans had waited years for. (Sound

familiar?) A return to the from-above view of the original *Zelda*, but with delightful, colourful graphics (check out the Castle and the Sanctuary) and a map that you can zoom around in a 3D perspective. With its secret caves and surprise-filled forests, this would appear to be Miyamoto's childhood – but on the SNES. ★★★★★

(22) Super Mario Kart

■ SNES ■ 1992
■ Mario, Princess Daisy, Koopa Trooper and chums as they were meant to be: doing battle with turtle shells and bananas. Preferred by some die-hard fanatics to its 64-bit sequel, not least for the intense



“Imagine the spirit of a child entering a cave alone. The cold air. The danger and the temptation. These are the feelings we must recreate in our games.” *Shigeru Miyamoto*

■ Nintendo held up the release of N64 until Miyamoto said his game was ready.

Miyamoto Moments (continued)

two-player battle game (which Matt Bielby always loses). ★★★★★

(23) Super Mario Land 2: 6 Golden Coins

■ **Game Boy ■ 1992**
■ Almost like being able to pop *Super Mario World* into your pocket. A bigger, chunkier *Mario* (something of a relief on the Game Boy's titchy screen), a huge map to explore and secret bits to trip over at every step. Lovely. ★★★★★

(24) Wave Race

■ **Game Boy ■ 1992**
■ Kind of an *F-Zero* for the Game Boy, with a bird's-eye view of jet-skis racing over

black-and-white surf. Subtle handling and talented computer foes make it a laster. ★★★★★

(25) Yoshi

■ **Game Boy/NES ■ 1992**
■ Tricky take on the *Tetris/Columns* motif, where matching a top and a bottom egg-half hatches a Yoshi. It's always good to see the little chap. ★★★★★

(26) Mario Paint

■ **SNES ■ 1992**
■ Spend hours creating animated drawings and music, only to see it all vanish when you switch off your SNES. One for the “younger player”, let's say. Hopefully the 64DD's *Mario*

Artist suite ought to work better, should Miyamoto ever finish it. ★★★

(27) Super Mario All-Stars

■ **SNES ■ 1993**
■ A chance for Miyamoto archivists to acquire the first three *Super Mario Bros* games on one SNES cart, with spruced-up graphics. Notable mainly for how little the games had aged in the eight years since the series began. ★★★★★

(28) The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening

■ **Game Boy ■ 1993**
■ An epic black-and-white quest packed into a cart the



primitive. Game characters were sketched on squared paper before being squeezed into sprites which measured not-very-many pixels by even-fewer pixels. Today you're upset if you can't see the veins bulge on your character's arm when he squeezes the trigger; once players were delighted to make out the arms (or any other limbs) at all.

How about that cap, with its little 'M' logo? Miyamoto reveals its mundane truth: "He wears a hat because his hair would look silly if it remained static when he jumps. Also, I can't do hair styles very well."

But that still leaves the trademark 'tache, surely a bold pen-stroke in a world still recovering from the Village People. And yet... "His moustache is there because there weren't enough pixels to separate his mouth from his nose."

You see? The most successful game character in the history of everything – more recognisable to American school kids, according to a much-quoted survey of 1990, than Mickey Mouse – and he could have been created by anyone given the right bit of graph paper. Maybe.

THEORY 3: NINTENDO CENSORS HIS POST

Ask Shigeru Miyamoto what games he's playing these days and he'll look slightly mystified. He'll say something like, "Well, I'm playing a lot of *Zelda* at the moment." No no, you'll say – not for work, for fun. "Er... sometimes I play *Mario Kart* against my children." No, but what about other people's games? He'll look blank. You'll suggest the latest global chart-topping smash hit. He'll turn to his PR man and confer in Japanese. Then he'll turn back to you and say: "I've not really had a chance to play it. But I like some of the graphics."

He's not being uncharitable, or snobbish, or thick. He genuinely

never seems to have a clue about any games other than Nintendo's.

By contrast, if you'd walked into any games developer's office anywhere in the world in the middle of 1996 you'd have found an N64 set up, and *Super Mario 64* playing on the screen. Coders and designers would have been huddled around watching, some taking notes, others just slowly shaking their heads.

Most Western designers will talk freely about the games they enjoy playing. They might describe their new game as "...the best bits of...", "...a combination of...", "...I always wanted to do a version of..."

Try to describe a Miyamoto game in terms of other people's games, and you'll find it can't be done. *Pilotwings*? That's just a cross between... er... No, but *Mario Kart*, though – that's an update of... um...

It just never seems to occur to Miyamoto even to look at other designers' games, let alone to borrow ideas from them.

Either that or *he doesn't know that they exist*.

THEORY 4: HIS SPIES ARE EVERYWHERE

A scary hypothesis, but one with a powerful proponent. "Miyamoto knows what you're thinking at every moment," suspects Dave Perry, president of Shiny Entertainment and father of *Earthworm Jim*. "When you think you're being smart, or you do something unexpected, or even go the wrong way, he's already there with you."

It's true. You probably reckoned you were being pretty clever in *Super Mario Bros*, breaking your way through the top of the screen and running around among the scores and counters. Then perhaps you started to panic, fearing you wouldn't be able to get back down

again into the game. But Miyamoto was "there with you", and had provided an escape route further down the level. The omnipresent Miyamoto is thus able not just to anticipate you, but to surprise you. Idly shoot the Mario face carved into the side of the mountain in *Pilotwings 64* and – wahay! – it turns into Wario. See? He just knew that's what you'd do.

"We design games so that the player will try many things apart from the main course," Miyamoto explains. "Hidden secrets can induce him to explore. The player must be thinking, 'Well, I don't see anything here, but there could be, it's possible.' And when he finds something he didn't expect, it's a great satisfaction."

Jump around in seemingly empty

The trick is not simply to invent a loveable character. "Say hi to Terry Tapeworm!"

areas of *Super Mario Bros 3* and you'll cause invisible blocks to materialise, giving access to secret areas. Lift up enough rocks in *Zelda* and you might find a tunnel leading to a hidden cave. But remember: Miyamoto's men are watching you.

THEORY 5: HE WORKS ON SO MANY GAMES, SOME OF THEM ARE BOUND TO BE GOOD

Since the launch of the *Donkey Kong* coin-op in 1981, Shigeru Miyamoto has designed, directed or produced over 60 games. At any one time



■ Sales of Link's games aren't missing.



size of an After Eight. Hugely entertaining, despite the crippling cost of the AA batteries required to finish the thing. ★★★★★

(29) Starfox

■ SNES ■ 1993
■ Hyper-exciting, animal-oriented space combat action that introduced Fox McCloud, Slippy and all their animal pals to the world. As the first cart to include a Super FX 3D chip it also bought 3D polygon graphics to the previously sprite-based SNES. ★★★★★

(30) Yoshi's Cookie

■ Game Boy/NES ■ 1993
■ Yoshi fans will be disappointed to see Mario very much wearing the chef's trousers here. ★★★★★

(31) Yoshi's Safari

■ SNES ■ 1993
■ Insubstantial vehicle for the Super Scope, Nintendo's all-too-substantial shoulder-mounted light gun. Worth playing, though, for Yoshi's expression should you inadvertently shoot him in the back of the head. ★★

(32) Donkey Kong

■ Game Boy ■ 1994
■ The Game Boy version of an Atari *Donkey Kong* game. Don't ask. ★★★★★

(33) Wario Land: Super Mario Land 3

■ Game Boy ■ 1994
■ Miyamoto's darker side reveals itself again when, as in *Donkey Kong Jr*, you get to play the bad guy. In this case he's Wario, Mario's

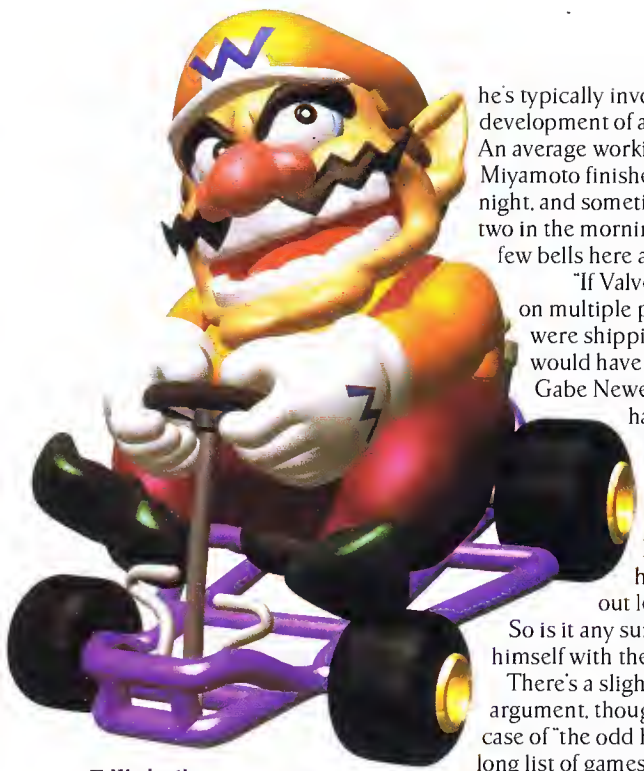
even tubbier alter ego. He's huge, in fact, filling up a fair proportion of the Game Boy's screen, and lays into the fluffy goodies with aplomb. ★★★★★

(34) Super Metroid

■ SNES ■ 1994
■ One of the most exciting beginnings in videogaming: barely have you pressed Start than you're struggling with a huge boss and then trying to flee from a space station before it self-destructs. Superbly cinematic, with a dark, *Aliens* feel – Shigs clearly never had much to do with *Metroid*. Or maybe he was getting all the anger, hate and loathing out of his system before his next SNES project... ★★★★★

(35) Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island

■ SNES ■ 1995
■ Baby Mario rides on Yoshi's back through a super-happy, drawn-in-pastels, Super-FX-propelled world. Our prehistoric pal can lick up baddies and convert them into eggs, to be trailed along behind until they're needed. He can also "pound the ground", and turn into a helicopter or a mole tank. It's fantastic fun, astonishing to look at and is Miyamoto at his most sublime. There are even spoof *Sonic* and *Tetris* bits. If Miyamoto was pushing the SNES this hard four years into its life, what will we see on the N64 come the millennium? ★★★★★



■ Wario: the darker side of plumbing?

he's typically involved in the development of around ten games. An average working day for Miyamoto finishes at ten o'clock at night, and sometimes he's there until two in the morning (which rings a few bells here at *Arcade*).

"If Valve had tried to work on multiple projects while we were shipping *Half-Life*, we would have imploded," admits Gabe Newell. And if *Half-Life* had turned out to be awful, we'd probably never have heard from them again. Miyamoto, though, has games coming out left, right and centre.

So is it any surprise that he finds himself with the odd hit?

There's a slight snag with this argument, though: it's not simply a case of "the odd hit". Looking at the long list of games on his resumé it's hard to find one that's not an out-and-out, five-star corker. *Mario Paint* was a bit of a dead-end, maybe. And you'd have been doing well to have squeezed six minutes' entertainment from *Yoshi's Safari*. But both were brave experiments and made the best of a couple of dodgy Nintendo add-ons – the SNES Mouse and the hopeless Super Scope.

Ah ha. Everything he's published. Could it be that we never see the crap Miyamoto games? Long before work began on *Super Mario 64*, for example, Miyamoto began a 3D *Mario* game using the Super FX chip – the device that powered *Starfox* on the SNES. The game was abandoned, presumably because it didn't work. Many other companies would have

released it anyway, but Nintendo, accruing profits nearing £1 billion a year at the time, could afford to discard it. How many other failed Miyamoto projects lie cluttering up the basement of Nintendo's Entertainment Analysis and Development lab? Er, probably not that many. Still, eh?

THEORY 6: MIYAMOTO ACTUALLY RUNS NINTENDO

"Nintendo is one of those rare companies that puts the top priority on the developers' voices, not the marketing people's," said Miyamoto in *Arcade* 1. "So it's fun to work here because I can do what I want to," which is rather understating his position.

In principle, Nintendo is controlled by Hiroshi Yamauchi, a 71-year-old who rarely smiles. Yamauchi inherited control of the company in 1949, oversaw its development from a small maker of playing cards into the world's most successful videogames company, and rules its global operations ruthlessly from the Mother Brain – his office in Nintendo's Kyoto HQ.

In practice, however, Yamauchi would be the first to admit that he's not exactly the world's most square-eyed videogame junkie. In fact, the best games-related decision he ever made was to put Shigeru Miyamoto in charge of the games.

That was in 1984, when Miyamoto was appointed head of Nintendo's R&D 4 department, with the responsibility of developing a range of carts for the new Famicom (Family Computer) console – the machine we know as the NES. Since then Miyamoto has had a hand in every single game developed by Nintendo. He wields a power other game designers can only dream of. He's untroubled by the finance and marketing people with their

demographic targets, their fiscal quarters and their focus groups. Miyamoto has earned the right to make the games he wants to play, and make them however he likes, and not even Hiroshi Yamauchi stands in his way. The Nintendo sales department might nervously suggest release dates, but Miyamoto never signs off a game until he's sure it's absolutely spot-on.

This inevitably leads to frustrating delays. The world was kept waiting over a year for *Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time*. The launch of the N64 was postponed for a year while Miyamoto put the finishing touches to *Super Mario 64*. This allowed Sony vital breathing space to establish the PlayStation.

But Miyamoto's perfectionism does mean that every Nintendo title is as perfect as a game can be.

"The secret of the *Super Mario* games is that we play and play and play," Miyamoto has said in the past. "The most important factor is making players feel 'comfortable' with a game. It's delicate fine-tuning that can give players the comfort to manipulate their character just as they wish through the hand-held controller. This comfort is achieved by the perfect integration of graphics, sound and playability with perfectly synchronised timing." And by nobody else sticking their nose in.

Hiroshi Yamauchi has announced he'll retire in 2000. His two children have never been involved in Nintendo's management. So there's no obvious heir to the Mother Brain big chair. Or is there?

Okay, so enough of all this conspiracy theorising. Let's get back to the known facts. In his 21 years at Nintendo, Miyamoto's devotion to his work has made successes of the NES, the Game Boy, the Super NES and the N64. And, as long as he keeps at it we don't really care how

Looking at his list of games, it's hard to find one that's not an out-and-out, five star corker.

Miyamoto Moments (continued)

(36) Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven

■ SNES ■ 1995

Other manufacturers had all but abandoned their 16-bit consoles by now, but Nintendo's SNES games just got better and better. *Mario RPG* throws Mario and his band together on a quest to – go on, guess. No? – rescue the princess, and also tackle the problem of a magic sword having smashed Bowser's castle and scattered baddies everywhere. ★★★★★

(37) Super Mario 64

■ N64 ■ 1996

Everyone can remember the instant they first

glimpsed Mario running around in 3D. With its awe-inspiring graphics and delicate control system, Miyamoto had devised a game that made complete sense of the N64's "Reality" co-processor and analogue control stick. It was simultaneously a natural progression from *Super Mario World* and a completely new type of game. Rival developers wept into their Red Bull while Sony immediately got to work on its own analogue joystick. Nintendo had delayed the N64's launch by a year while Miyamoto finished *Super Mario 64*. It was worth it. A modern classic. ★★★★★

(38) Pilotwings 64

■ N64 ■ 1996

"It's great, but you can't shoot things" was a common criticism of the SNES original. Enter *Pilotwings 64*, with a rocket-armed gyrocopter. As before, the game is essentially a graphical showcase for Nintendo's hardware. This time, however, the landscapes are creamy-smooth and festooned with ultra-detailed buildings. Although primarily developed by Paradigm Studios in the US, there are tell-tale Miyamoto fingerprints all over, including stars to collect and secret tunnels through mountains. ★★★★★

(39) Wave Race 64

■ N64 ■ 1996

Having little in common with its Game Boy namesake, this boasts water effects so convincing you'll want to play it within range of the bathroom. ★★★★★

(40) Mario Kart 64

■ N64 ■ 1997

In multi-player mode this is the best use imaginable for the N64's four controller sockets. Indeed, although Miyamoto rarely takes games home, this is one he plays with his kids. But a short-lived one-player mode and some glitchy, unintentional short-cuts ruin what could have been an all-time classic. ★★★★★



or why he does what he does. But for all Miyamoto's quality control, his tweaking and refining, there are signs he's becoming frustrated with the time it takes to get things done at Nintendo, even that he's smelling stale air there. "I feel there's a bad atmosphere where you can't do anything new at Nintendo these days," he recently told Japanese magazine *The 64 Dream*. "So now we're changing into an organisation that allows people to do new things - we're energising ourselves. I'm telling my people, from now on let's go for games that can be developed in six months and sell a million copies."

And if that doesn't work out? Could the unthinkable happen? Could Miyamoto move on? It's normally unheard of for a game designer to stay with one company for his entire career. Is it possible Mario's dad could go the way of *Populous*' Peter Molyneux; *Quake*'s John Romero; *Tomb Raider*'s Toby Gard and Paul Douglas? If so, could Nintendo survive without him?

Gabe Newell for one isn't sure it could: "If Microsoft were to say to Mr. Miyamoto, 'Here's \$100 million. Do for the PC what you've been doing for Nintendo systems, and tell us what we need to do to make the PC more friendly to the console market,' I think Nintendo would be in a very difficult situation. For me as a gamer, his products are the exclusive reason I have a Nintendo 64 at home."

"Shigeru is Nintendo," concurs John Romero. "I'm just amazed that he's stayed this long and has kept his quality as high as he has. If Shigeru ever leaves, that part of gaming history will become legendary."

But a Miyamoto-goes solo Bob-ombshell doesn't seem likely for a while at least. By recognising, rewarding and promoting the talent that has made it successful, Nintendo has instilled an enviable loyalty in its employees - on both

sides of the Pacific. The only notable defection from Nintendo in recent memory has been Game Boy creator Gunpei Yokoi, seemingly a scapegoat for the disastrous Virtual Boy, and even he stuck around as a consultant until his death in 1997.

More than that, Miyamoto needs Nintendo as much as it needs him. He's surrounded by a team of programmers, graphic artists, musicians, level designers, testers, directors and producers who are completely in tune with his ways of thinking and working. And, despite his awesome talents, he is as dependent on them as they so obviously are on him.

And it's just as well, because Miyamoto fans have plenty to look forward to over the months to come. Nintendo has always made a point of supporting machines throughout their life cycles, with games that get better and better as the hardware matures. Just look at *Yoshi's Island* and *Super Mario RPG* from the SNES's twilight days.

With the N64 two years old, we can soon expect the first pictures of *Super Mario 64 2*. Work's been underway for a while, with Luigi due to return. *Jungle Emperor*, starring a lion, is due for the middle of 1999, although the development whip has been handed to *Yoshi's Story* boss Makoto Tezuka.

With faster development in mind, Miyamoto has recently cottoned on to the idea of re-using game engines - an obvious concept to those who've grown up with the *Doom* and *Quake* sagas, but a novelty in Japan.

So the team that developed *Ocarina of Time* is being split in two, with each half setting off to create a game using the *Zelda* engine. One will be the next in the *Zelda* series; the other, a totally new game. (*Metroid 64*? Huh? Maybe?) And then... who knows? Miyamoto no doubt does. A couple of years ago

he was asked how he'd like to see games develop in the future. "I have some background as a comic book artist," he said. "In comics, I can use different layouts on every page. If I could use a similar technique for



A character as distinctive as Mario can't be an accident. Or can it?

games, it could be very exciting. I'd also like to come up with a new type of game that doesn't require you to sit in front of a television."

Heaven knows what that might mean. But if Miyamoto's involved it should be, as he says, very exciting.

"I think you can pin the sum total of gaming innovation over the last ten years on four people," reckons Alex Garden at Relic. "Mr Miyamoto is without doubt at the top of that very small pile. With some rare exceptions, everything he's produced has raised the quality of gaming to levels most developers just dream of."

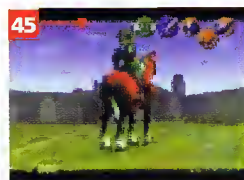
No doubt we'd all drink a large Medicine of Life to that.



■ All-Kong-ering. The king lives on in Miyamoto's head.



■ Just a normal, every day, epoch-making, creative genius and his haircut.



(41) Starfox 64

■ N64 ■ 1997

■ This bewitching blend of *Independence Day* and *Star Wars* sees Shigs in full effect. "I'm most proud of the cinematic feel of this game, in that the player feels like they are seeing a movie as they play," said Miyamoto at the game's unveiling. And, you know what, he's right. *Starfox 64* is much better than the spooled-off-CD "interactive movies" of yore and moves seamlessly from player-controlled action to story-telling scenes, all in the same 3D graphics. It will live forever, it's so lovely. *Starfox 64* was also the first game to be accompanied by the Rumble Pak; again, an imitation from Sony swiftly followed. ★★★★★

(42) Yoshi's Story

■ N64 ■ 1998

■ "We're getting there," sing the Yoshis, in Japanese, in the captivating between-levels song. "Still a way to go, but we're getting happier. Still some way to go to the Super Happy Tree." Maybe you have to hear it for yourself. Anyway, this is a lovely attempt to prove that 2D's not dead yet, albeit another "hands off" game for Miyamoto - he passed the reins to Makoto Tezuka in order to wrestle *Zelda 64* back under control. ★★★★★

(43) 1080 Snowboarding

■ N64 ■ 1998

■ Wave Race 64, only colder. ★★★★★

(44) F-Zero X

■ N64 ■ 1998

■ Much-anticipated sequel to the SNES "Miyamotoring" classic. Spurning the florid scenery favoured by other developers, our hero went all out for speed with this one - in keeping with his philosophy that it's how it plays that matters most. Another four-player special, too. ★★★★★

(45) The Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time

■ N64 ■ 1998

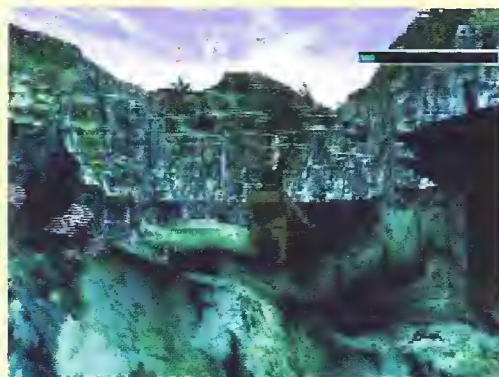
■ Quite simply the best videogame ever made. We all love it, and recommend that you beg, borrow or steal an N64 to play Miyamoto's magnum opus. ★★★★★

KICK ASS

BECOME A DEMON GAME PLAYER OVERNIGHT



■ Lara gets to shoot up the South Pacific.



COASTAL VILLAGE

Is your suntan lotion applied? Sunglasses on? Well take 'em off – you start this level

underwater. Immediately turn right and swim into the area there. In the middle is a block of what looks like concrete – this block has the **Smuggler's Key** on it. Pick up the key. Swim back out towards the entrance. Almost directly opposite you, slightly hidden, is a place where you can get out of the water. Do so. Jump up one block and get the small medikit. Then dive back into the water. Now swim over to the sand banks that are by the waterfalls. Climb out of the water and head over to the beach with palm trees along it.

From the waterfall end there's a progression of thin palm tree, fat palm tree, thin palm tree. At the last one there's an entrance to an alternative route that takes you down a slide. If you don't want to take this route jump to point (A) on page 77.

Slide down, run across the pool and jump up on the far side to the left. You'll find yourself in a hidden valley. Ready your weapons and jog along, dealing with the native on the way. Just where he pops out from you'll see a small rock outcrop that's your launch pad to the big rock sitting in the middle of a lethal **mud pool**. Long-jump (and grab) over to it, but be careful when you climb up – there's an **arrow trap**

here. You're safe anywhere except in the middle of this block. Over to your right there's a large medikit a long-jump away. Get it and return to the block in the middle. Now long-jump to the other side of the mud pool and into the forest. In the clearing you'll meet another native – dispose of him.

Turn around and look back the way you came. You can see an easy climb up to the right of a tree. Climb up, forward and then left and climb up the tree. Turn right and climb up through the foliage. Turn around and short-jump to the branch. Head left and jump on to the ledge. You will see another ledge with **shotgun shells**. Go get.

Make your way carefully back the way you came, but go on instead of dropping down through the foliage. On the other side of the tree is another branch. Jump over to it. Go to the end, long-jump and grab the red crystal (**Serpent Stone**) on this branch. Turn around and you'll notice a partially obscured ledge at the end of the branch.

Climb up for some **Desert Eagle clips**. Back to the branch and use the slide to your right to get down. Go to the far edge of the clearing and short-jump across to the waterfall. Drop into the water and you'll be washed across, ending up on a ledge.

A **savegame crystal** is a couple of long-jumps away. Go and get it. Return via the obvious path to the ledge below the waterfall again.

Look closely to discover an entrance-way either side of the waterfall at your level. Jump through the 'fall and collect the second **Serpent Stone**.

Back out on to the ledge, jump the other way and grab the ladder. Climb up to the top, drop off left, follow the passage and climb up the next ladder. As you emerge there's a big rock to your right with a small medikit on it. You'll see a cave entrance high up to the left of the waterfall. Go to the right of the entrance and climb up. Left and short-jump and grab.

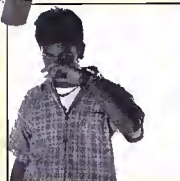
KICK ASS AT... TOMB RAIDER III

Format: **PC and PlayStation** | Publisher: **EIDOS Interactive** | Developer: **Core** |
Price: **£39.99** | Players: **1** | ★★★★★ | Words by: **Steve Farragher**



WELCOME TO KICK ASS TOMB FLAILER

Edited by | **Rich Pelley**



Blimey. There's so much to fit in to this month's Kick Ass that I've been squashed up into this tiny little box with not even enough room to say "Welcome to Kick Ass. This month we have a 17-page solution to *Tomb Raider III* (minus the first level, but hey! You've probably done that by yourself already), a game that is crying out for a solution like no other game since *Tomb Raider* and *Tomb Raider II*." I'll give it a go, but I'm sure space is too tight. [Clears throat]. Welcome to Kick Ass. This month we have a 16-page solution to *Tomb Raider III* (minus the first level, but hey! You've probably done that by yourself already), a game that... see, out of room. On with the tips...

ALSO TIPPED THIS MONTH

PLAYSTATION

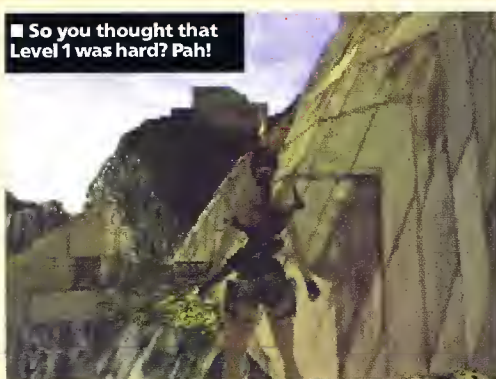
P93 *TENCHU*

P93 *SPYRO THE DRAGON*

N64

P94 *TUROK 2*

■ So you thought that Level 1 was hard? Pah!



Pull yourself up and deal with the native guard. Don't go in the cave yet. Turn around and long-jump back the way you came. From this new, higher ledge turn right and long-jump. Jump to the right again and pick up the third **Serpent Stone**.

Work your way back to the cave entrance and use the three Serpent Stones to open the three gates. Slide down the passageway and out into a village clearing. Shoot the native and then hug the left wall until you come across a **small medikit**. Drop down the slope into the main clearing. You're now at **Point (B)** in the solution for this level (see left).

Point (A)

If you decide against the Serpent Stone route, turn around and look at the water. Notice that single **block of stone** sticking up out of it? There's a small medikit on top of that. Go get it.

At the far end of the lagoon, you should see a wooden palisade. Run over, climb up to it and into the room with a fire burning in the middle. At the far end is the **Smuggler's Keyhole**.

Use your key, and a trapdoor will open behind you. Lower yourself in and pick up the **savegame crystal**. It's probably best to use it, too. Go down the corridor that leads off. As soon as you drop down, start crawling; there's a set of **spikes** about to spring out.

Follow the corridor right.

As you come out towards the underground lake, have your guns ready – someone's firing **poison darts** at you.

When they're dead, there're two crocodiles in the lake. Shoot them both before you go any further.

Rather than dive in the water, take the long-jump straight in front of you. Then a short-jump over another watery gap and climb up the block in front of you.

Jump up from here and grab the **vinces** on the ceiling. Use them to traverse the water. Drop down on the other side of the lake. Turn right, short-jump to another block of rock, then run up the pathway. At the end turn left and haul up. Haul up again. You're on a ledge with two exits.

If you turn around where you came up, there's a long-jump over to the other side, but before you do that, go to the other end of the ledge and jump and climb into the just-visible crawl space where you'll find yourself some **MPS clips**.

Jump backwards on to the ledge then go for that long-jump. Go forward, jump up and catch hold of the vines again. Head off to your right.

When you can go no further, drop down. You'll find yourself on a bridge (the blow-dart man was up here). Cross over to the other side and jump left at the end, down on to a long slide. Just before the end of the slide jump forward.

You'll find yourself on a little path that leads round to a

ladder. Careful though, there's another blow-darter way up above you. Having dealt with him, jump on to the ladder.

Make sure it's a long-jump or you'll land on those **spikes** below it. Go up the ladder there's a big medikit to your right. Then drop off the ledge backwards, catch hold and traverse left. Pull yourself up as soon as you can take the **savegame crystal** and the small medikit as your reward. Then just run off the far end of that ledge; don't worry, you'll land on a single block.

Fall off backwards, but hang on and traverse left, pulling yourself up on the other side. Turn left and jump on to another block. Turn right and go down the passageway – follow it along until you come out into the open air on a **rope bridge**. Run straight over, pulling out your guns as you go; there's a nasty native waiting for you.

The path forks here: right's a dead-end. You should be wary of the left too – as soon as you step round it you'll trigger a trap that shoots spinning, **razor-sharp discs**; a native'll appear behind you.

Get on your hands and knees and crawl under the discs. You'll come into a huge room with two big windows, a waterfall and a clearly visible **savegame crystal** with a moat between you and it.

Just this side of the moat is a large medikit. Don't be easily tempted by the crystal or medikit – like most visible things in *TRIII*, they hide traps.

As soon as you step near the middle of the room it's time for the old **poison-arrow trap** nonsense. Run around to your right instead, where there's a switch set against the wall that will close the nearest window and turn off the trap. Then go and get the medikit and jump over the water. Don't fall in though – you'll get swept away (though if you do don't worry, you're in the Serpent Stone route, as described on the left).

Crawl carefully toward the



■ Armed? Ready? But you forgot your torch.



savegame crystal – there's an arrow trap here, too. Drop down the clearly visible hole, drawing your weapons as you go down the slide. You'll come out into the **native village**. Be careful, there are lots of enemies here. One comes at you straight away.

Point (B)

Follow the path – taking care of the blow-dart man high to your left – until it forks (the first hut has a **rocket** in it, the second is empty). Take the left fork, another blow-darter pops out immediately. When you've disposed of him, keep going – you'll come out by a big tree with a tree-house on top. There's another native lurking here – kill him.

Keep going round until you're facing a mud pool – watch out, this is **deadly quicksand**. Turn left and climb up the first rock (you'll be able to hear someone walking about, he's the other side of

the rock). Jump on to the next rock and shoot him.

Drop down to where he was patrolling and use the wheel. You'll see a closing trapdoor. Go back to the clearing with the **treehouse** (watch out though, there's another native lurking).

At this point you may hear someone shouting to you. Ignore them for the moment. Turn around and head back to the village. Careful though – there's yet another native on his way over to you.

Follow the other fork in the path which takes you into the village proper – two natives wait for you here. Deal with them and then go into the first hut to pick up a small medikit. Come out and go straight across the clearing to pick up the **savegame crystal**.

Then come back out into the clearing and left past the final hut. There's a large medikit in there, but there's also **quicksand** in front of it, so forget about it.

Keep going round the hut and follow the path to the right. Before you go over the trapdoor you closed earlier with the wheel, jump up to the ledge above it and pick up the **shotgun shells**.

Come down, go over the trapdoor and into another clearing. There's an empty hut to your right with an open doorway. Run around to the right of the hut, follow the path down and then turn right for a **secret area**.

Careful, there's a native in here. Pick up the **MPS clips** and the shotgun shells. Run back out and head straight forward, past the back of the hut and into the doorway of the next hut where you'll find some flares.

Keep looking out for natives who'll suddenly appear.

Come out of the hut, turn left and jump up to the ledge. Ignore the big hut at the far right – it's empty. Go left, turn right and by the tree is the entrance to the next hut along which has a **wheel** in it. Turn it and expect to be immediately jumped by an enemy. Come back out to the right and drop down into the clearing. Turn around and climb up the ladder. Get off to the left at the first landing. A window will obligingly open. Go through it and jump to the left on to the platform there (you'll have to grab and haul). Now be very, very careful. You can see a passageway with a **fire** to the left. To the right is a hidden

native who will push you on to the flames. Draw your best weapons (a shotgun should do), run in and immediately jump backwards while firing.

When he's dead go in and right, down to the end, right again and jump on to the back of the first hut's roof. Head forwards and jump on to the second roof. Immediately to your left are **harpoons**, hidden in the cave's recesses. Pick 'em up, head back out and go round to the left along the wooden walkway to the end.

Turn right, walk and jump to the top of the hut roof. Jump and grab the vine. Hang tough along the vine's pathway – straight on, then right, then left. When you've gone as far as you can, drop on to the hut where you found the flares.

A running jump takes you on to the roof of the empty hut that was first on the right when you entered this clearing.

Go down to the right and into the treehouse. Light a flare. At the far side is a **switch** that activates a gate above the flames on the other side of the clearing, making them safe. When you trigger it, a teleporting native will attack.

Go back to the flames (drop down on to the floor of the clearing and go up the ladder again, this time getting off to the right). Jump on to the **grille** above the flames and make sure to jump forwards off the far end of it. There's a switch at the end – prepare to be ambushed again, and hit it.

Once you've dealt with the murderous native, turn around. Ignore the **switch** to the right; it turns on fatal flames beneath you. Go left and, keeping hard against the left wall, dash past the wheels. Go to the end of the corridor, turn the wheel and then slide backwards down the subsequently opened doorway to your left, grabbing and releasing at the end to avoid fall damage. Head into the water on the far side of the clearing and you'll find an open gateway. Swim past the crocodile that patrols this underwater passage.

Go to the end, haul out and climb the ladder in front of you. Follow the passage round, head across the rope bridge, right and short-jump on to the treehouse from the end of the ledge. And that's it – you've survived. **Level done.**



■ The tourist isn't made very welcome in this village.

■ In this case, "crash site" doesn't refer to a nice place to have a kip after your tropical picnic lunch.



CRASH SITE

You're in the tree house. The way you came in is blocked. Get down to the ground level. Any attempt to run back down the ravine with the rope bridge above it will result in you being crushed by falling rocks. You can't go back, the only way is forward across the mud pool. To do this you'll have to jump across the lily pads, but only some of them are safe. Refer to the Swamp Map in your inventory for details or follow these instructions. Down to the edge of the pool and a short-jump to the lily pad on your left. Then make a long-jump to the farthest left of the available four pads. Jump to the sand between two sloping rocks.

Turn round and long-jump to the **farthest lily** on the left and haul up. Then long-jump to the one that's ahead and slightly left from here. Turn towards the jungle path on the

far side and long-jump to the pad that's now to the right of the two in front of you. Then jump to the one ahead and left. Jump to the farthest left of the three in front of you. Carry on into the corner and pick up the two **MP5 clips** from the not-so-secret secret area on the ledge above the pad.

Go back to the pad you came from and long-jump to safety on to the jungle trail. Go forward to the down-slope, but before you go down it take a long-jump to a ledge on the left to get some very handy **grenades**. Go back and down the slope and get some guns ready; there's a little dinosaur down here. Once it's an ex-dino, run through the pool to the right and into the cavern. Climb the block to the right, turn left and jump across to the block on the other side. Climb up through the gap and into a corridor. Get down to the end and you can drop down into the **crash site**.

There's another dinosaur down here (it comes at you from the left), so be prepared. Follow the left wall around,



past an area of darkness and a tree, and you'll reach the back end of the plane.

Here there's a strange **pyramid-shaped outcrop**. Walk to the top of it and you'll see a triangular ledge that you can jump on to. Turn around and there's a jump on to another ledge. Turn around again and there's an unpromising-looking long-jump into the darkness, just left of the ledge you came up by. Do it. Straight ahead of you is a drop into a room. There're some **Uzi clips** just to the right of where you came in.

From the obvious exit you must do a long-jump and grab, you'll find yourself hanging from a **trellis** on the other side of the room.

Turn right, swing along and take the first left. Next head left again at the end. Then right, across the dodgy-looking sparse bit, right again and drop down at the hole in the wall.

Turn back the way you came. Drop down, go round to the right and pull the **lever**. Now you can get to that lever you saw earlier. Leave the **savegame crystal** and climb back up to the hole in the wall. Swing along the trellis, back the way you came and along to that newly available lever.

At the end of the trellis, drop and grab; you'll find that this is a climbable wall. Climb down, and then back up to get at the lever. Throw it and more of the path becomes available.

From the edge of this tiny alcove a short-jump takes you on to the **pillar** with the **savegame crystal**. Jump forwards again to the ledge underneath the hole in the wall. Go back round and pull the lever again. Now climb back up to the hole in the wall, jump up and grab the trellis and follow it back round the way you came. When you get to

the far side of the **huge stalactite** (the one with a gate in it, opposite where you jumped in first) go right up against it.

Drop and then grab the climbable surface. Climb all the way down until Lara's feet are nearly touching the bottom. Then push the jump button and let go – you'll find yourself in little alcove with a **lever**. Pull the lever, turn around and jump back on to the stalactite. Climb up, go right and pull yourself into the now-open area. Grab what's there! Turn around. Now jump far to the right (to the ledge underneath the second lever you pulled in here). As you slide off the ledge, grab hold. Shimmy over until you're under that lever, then pull yourself up and press the jump button. You'll be back on the platform where the **savegame crystal** was. Jump back over to the hole in the wall, climb up and go through it.

Drop down, haul yourself up to the platform in the far corner and crawl through the **crawl-space**. You'll find yourself on a ledge high above the beginning of the crash site area. It's safe to drop down from here.

Now follow the wall around to the right, past a big tree and then round a sharp, slightly disguised turn to the right. Drop down, run forward and climb up.

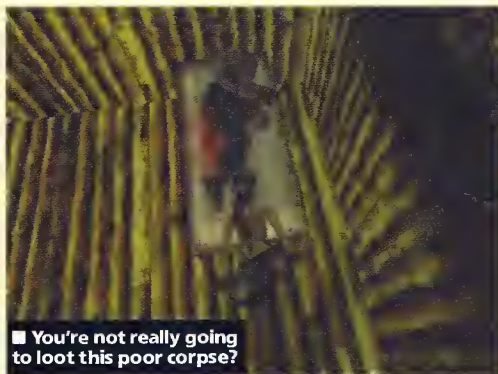
You'll find yourself in a little cave leading into a clearing. There are some very handy **MP5 clips** just to your right. Get ready for combat – best weapon prepared. There's a man here, but he's not the real enemy that you're after so spare his life. Just after you sight him, two dinosaurs will charge out. Try and kill them both without hurting him. If he survives you can follow him, and he'll show you a **gate** he wants opening.

If he doesn't, just follow the left wall along from where you came in and you'll see a dark opening that leads down a tunnel to the gate in question. You can just make out a lever and another gate on the far side of it.

Head back into the clearing where you killed the dinosaurs. There are ledges around three sides. From the side opposite where you came in, you'll be able to climb up one of these ledges and jump into the branches of the trees. Up here you'll find a large medikit and (on another, nearby branch) some **flares**.

Head to the edge of the clearing and you'll see a slope downwards. The dino' down there is dead, but there are four tiny green ones that aren't, so have a weapon prepared.

To the left of where you slid down is another gate with a lever and a gate beyond it. Ignore it for now, but pick up the **flares** in front of it. Go to the water-filled cavern on the other side. Wade through the water and round to the right.



In what looks like a mini **volcano** you'll find a dead body. Loot the body and you'll get **Commander Bishop's Key**. You'll also find out that this is no volcano, it's really a dinosaur nest. As a **t-rex** comes lumbering round the corner, dash past it and run back to the second gate where you just picked up the flares.

The gate's open now and makes a great sheltering spot while you pick off the dino at your leisure. Pull the lever while you're here. Go back into the water-filled cavern and take the other fork this time. At the end are some flares and another **lever**. Give it a yank. Now the gates are open all the way back up to the top and you can return to the crash site.

Back by the plane, keep to the right-hand wall again. There's a square, black hole to the right (toward the rear end of the plane). Light a flare and you'll see it's a **brick-lined passage**. Drop down into it. At the end a gate will swing open into an arena. There's a dead body and a dead dino here. Draw a weapon and prepare for five of the tiny green dinosaurs to run out at you as you move in.

Kill them, then pick up the medikit and the **MP5 clips**. Of the five alcoves in here, two have levers in them. Pull them both. Go back the way you came and as you re-enter the crash site, you'll hear gunfire.

Climb the slope to the right and you'll see two men fighting a dinosaur. Let them get on with it. When they've killed it, slide down the slope towards them. Immediately right is an **empty alcove**.

Run past it. Keep to the right wall. The next alcove to the right has a passage that leads down to a clearing with a bridge and an entrance to a temple. Here's another man fighting with a dinosaur – give him a hand if you like.

Just to the right of where you came in is a block you can climb up. Climb up the next block as well and you'll see a vine to your left.

Climb up this to the top. Leap backwards and keep your finger on the jump button – you'll jump off a ledge and on to a branch with a **dinosaur** on it. Kill it.

At the far end of the branch (by the steep upward slope), there's a jump across to a ledge on the left. Jump up

from here to the triangular ledge in the corner. Turn round towards the tree, back against the wall, and jump and grab. Haul yourself up, jump on to the ledge and collect the **savegame crystal**.

Jump from here on to the branch to your right and from this advantageous position take care of the next dinosaur. From this level there's a jump to a secret place to the left of where the branch slopes upwards. Get up there and collect the **MP5 clips**. It's a comparatively easy job to slide back down.

Walk towards the dinosaur hanging from a **rope**. Long-jump to the green patch just to the left of it for a small medikit. Before jumping back, shoot the dinosaur hanging from a rope. It'll fall off and into the river below, distracting the piranhas. Now jump back to where you came from and make your way back down to the ground the way you came up. Go over to the river, with the **piranhas** now feeding, it's safe to jump in and pull the under-water lever that's sited just by them. This opens a gate on the other side. Don't use the bridge (it'll just collapse) instead swim along the same side as the lever to the left until you find a point where you can get out. Prepare a weapon. You've opened a door that will release a dino. Kill it and go through the door. Keep your gun out – there's another one through here. Now you're locked in a large room with tell-tale **gas holes** in the floor.

There are three levers in here which we'll call levers 1, 2 and 3, counting clockwise from the entrance. Pull them all in order. Lever 1 releases a dino, so be ready. Lever 3 releases two. Good luck. When all three are pulled, the door to the room opens again, and so does a **trapdoor** in the ceiling above the only raised bit in the room. Climb up into this new room to get your hands on the **savegame crystal**.

There's a body in here. Go over to it and you can collect **Lt Tuckerman's Key**, but beware – yet another dino will spring out as soon as you do. That's it for in here.

Go back to the plane. On the left hand side (as it looks forward) is the outline of a door. Go up to it, jump up and grab. Shimmy left until you can safely haul yourself up, you're



now standing right on top of the plane's nose.

Run along the fuselage toward the back, jump forward when you can't run, and drop down the hole in the top. There's a dino in here, and some **MP5 clips**. In the cockpit are **two keyholes**.

Use the two keys on them. Now drop down into the cargo hold at the back of the plane. At the far end is a purple room with a switch in it.

Hit the switch and the tail-gate of the plane opens and the **gun** that you've just walked past is rolled out.

Run to the gun and get on it, press **⊗** to fire it. Hundreds of dinosaurs will charge at you, so use the gun to kill them all. It can be moved up and down as well as side-to-side.

Try and get a steady left-right rhythm going and you should have no problem despatching them. When they stop coming, elevate the gun and shoot past the wing lying along the ground. There are two sections of wall up there that you can knock out. Do it.

You'll probably have lost a few of your friends in this battle. Run around to where they fell and pick up the **MP5 clips** they've left behind. Run along the broken wing and jump over the river. Climb up the obvious place in the corner. Do the right-hand area first. There's a **savegame crystal** and a large medikit here. Don't use either of them as the level is about to end. Jump through to the other new area and the **level's** (finally) **over**.



■ Hard as nails and twice as useful, Lara prepares to leap into the known.



MADUBU GORGE

Run forward, ignoring the bats that come out to your left. A green, venom-spitting demon is lurking here. Run on to the second bit of rock and take him out before he gets too close (use a shotgun). Turn right (past the second column) and then move slowly toward the edge. A demon will climb out.

Go down and three blocks to the left. Short-jump to the block in the middle of the river. Long-jump to the far side and grab. Shimmy right until you can haul up. Turn right, haul up.

Short-jump ahead. Go right, slide down on to the triangle. Left, short-jump on to the triangle. short-jump forward again on to the triangle.

Turn slightly left and short-jump on to the block. Turn the switch to your left.

Carefully go back the way you came (there's a **nasty slide** to look out for; go to the far left of it before jumping). At the point you initially hauled up from, drop backwards down and grab. Shimmy along left until the end (don't haul up). Drop and grab. Climb up, through the crawl space. Down to the end and then jump

across to the **savegame crystal** and switch.

Flick the switch. Jump back across and climb up through the now-fallen **trellis**. Facing the river (at the edge), jump up and grab the vines.

Swing across the river. Let yourself drop down on the far side. Jump off backwards and grab. Shimmy right until you can haul up. Turn right, aim as far to the right of the gorge-side that goes off at an "L" as you think you can long-jump.

When you hit and slide down, grab and shimmy right until you can haul up. Jump up through the now-visible entrance. Go into the **cave**; the first right is empty, second right goes down. Slide to the bottom, turn right against the wall and jump backwards and down, then grab and release.

At the bottom turn round gently – you're in a **spike trap**. Walk forward through it. Drop down, and go quick left and right into a natural cave.

Ignore the **savegame crystal** you can glimpse to your left. Jump forward up the slope. Then run up and left up the sloping steps. At the top you'll be attacked. Left and drop down and throw the switch **disguised as a nose**.

Run back down the stairs and past the natural cavern. Into the darkness and crawl forward through the obvious space. Be careful – there's another green creature here who'll try to trap you underneath. Haul up and then up again. Head across the rope bridge, left through the room, drop down, along to the end and jump up to the right for a **savegame crystal**.

Stay here for a minute, enjoy the view, then safely shoot the newly appeared **green creature** that pops up back where you just came in. Then go back that way, this time turning left after you exit the crawl-space and making your way back up to the first

■ Kill some time (and some animals) on a walk through the countryside.



room of this cave complex, using the handy climbable walls to get past the two slopes. Go through **the gate** that you saw open when you first hit the nose/switch.

From here make a long-jump towards the square platform you can just see in the waterfall. Then haul up to two triangular ledges in a row; the first a long-jump, the second a short. The second a long-jump will take you to just by the **savegame crystal** in the cave. Pick it up.

Go across to the other side of the bridge, jump straight up and grab the vines. Follow them all the way around the room (ignore the first opening) until you can go no further (next to another opening). Drop down and haul yourself up through the gap to the right. Turn right and go through the crawl-space. On the other side, stand up, go to the edge of the ledge, turn left and long-jump over to that climbable wall. Climb up and over, then follow the passageway along until you come out in a pool area.

Wahey **kayak!** Before you jump in, kill the two crocodiles, then jump in the water and find the lever that opens the grille. If you're facing the grille, it's down and to the right.

Climb in the kayak, have a few practice paddles and then launch yourself through the grille. Down you go – try and stay straight through **the tube**. When you hit bottom, paddle over to the far right for the second waterfall, but make sure you go down straight. At the bottom of this fall, paddle hard to the left across the **green line** that stops the cleavers. Turn around and then paddle through them. You start on the left, so must try to move across to the right. At the bottom, the current will take you to the left, but you must get to the right fork, turn the kayak around and paddle against the current – eventually you will make progress.

Go down the right fork, and keep right at the next fork (the **red lines** handily warn you of danger – don't cross one). When the river rejoins, it's slalom time, and you must avoid the red lines. The trick here is to keep your speed right down by back-paddling.

After you've done the first rapid, you have to work your way right over to the left of the river and cross the green line.

Then go to the right, and back over to the left past the **savegame crystal**. Carry on down, round the left-hand at the bottom and over a huge waterfall. Make sure you're fully healed before you go over as you're almost certain to lose some life. Stay in the middle of the water and you'll pick up a **savegame crystal**.

From the lagoon at the bottom, paddle up the river to your left into a chamber with piranha. This room also has an odd weight suspended from a **gold chain**. Turn sharp right and paddle up a sort of hallway that turns right and opens into a waterfall cave. Through the waterfall at the far end for a secret **savegame crystal**. Back to the piranha chamber and paddle upstream through the only other new exit.

Turn left and then take another left at the fork into a **stagnant pool** with a crocodile in it. Get out of the boat and on to dry land. Beware, a **green creature** will jump you as soon as you do. Once you've disposed of it and the croc, walk around to the only exit from this place – back to the **piranha pool**.

Go to the edge, jump up, forwards and grab the vines. Follow them all the way along past the two fire-breathing faces (stay as far away from them as possible). Follow the vines as far as they go, then drop down. Turn around and long-jump to the other side and pick up a rocket. Left, haul up, forward, haul up. Then go forward and drop down into the **waterfall cave**. Go right to the end, then jump to your right. Follow the path around to your left and at the end jump to the triangle for a large medikit. Then go right up to the waterfall, turn left and long-jump to the other side for some **secret MP5 clips**. Go back to the other side, jump from the triangle to the walkway, then turn left and climb up. Turn right, go forward as far as you can, jump and grab. Haul yourself up. Turn right, jump and grab the vines. Swing along past another **fire-breathing face** and take the right fork. Go to the end and drop down. Turn left and follow the path that leads away.

At the end there's a long-jump over the **blades and spikes** to the base of a waterfall. Turn around and aim to the left of the sloping

surface opposite. Long-jump and grab the climbable wall. Traverse up and left till you can do no more. Drop down, turn around, go forward and into the entrance on your right. Turn around and fall backward into the hole, grabbing the lip as you go. Climb down the climbable surface to the bottom. Go along the corridor. A **boulder** will roll down towards you, use L2 to duck behind the raised platform in the middle. Head up and over that one and the same thing happens again, except with another boulder and another hiding place.

Pull yourself over the second one. Notice the boulder on the ceiling? That'll crush you unless you turn side on and walk sideways till you're lined up with the very beginning of the reflection of the flame on the far wall, then jump backwards and grab the ledge. Shimmy as far right as you can.

Then pull yourself back up. Down to the end and short-jump to the passage to the left. Short-jump over the **flames**, and keep moving forward for more boulder ducking. Move forward and haul yourself up.

Now you're back at the scene of some early kayaking. Go right and long-jump to the first platform you can see. On to the climbable wall and shimmy left on to the next platform. Crawl through the gap left and out to the **rapids**. Short-jump to the block in the middle, then long-jump to the obvious promontory. Short-jump to the block with the **zip-wire**. Ignoring the wire, go to the bottom of the island, long-jump to the **savegame crystal** and long-jump back again. Now go down the zip into the eerily lit blue and green area. Drop down into the bottom and climb up the column of faces. Haul over the top and look out for a green creature attacking from the right. Take the first left and pull the lever.

Go back to where you hauled up, and then down the corridor in front of you. A **torch** will light another green creature from the right. Drop to where he came up and take the slide down. You'll be where you left the kayak. Get back in. Go out the way you came and down the **plughole**. Follow it round to minimise damage. You'll fall into a large chamber with a croc. There're two landing points from where you'll be able to shoot it. One of the landing points has a gate in it. Drop off this one and dive to find the lever that opens it. Watch out though, two more crocs have now been released into the pool. Up and out of the water, through the gate and **the level's finished**.

■ The Temple – that's the sacred architecture done. Let's kill summat.



TEMPLE OF PUNA

You start in a long corridor. There are steps up to your right, down which two blow-darters are running. Deal with them quickly. Jump up and shoot the next one too. Go up to the end, haul yourself up twice and get ready for yet another pea shooter-wielding **maniac**. Haul up, run all the way up to the top and go through the crawl space. Haul up and down to the end of the passage and pick up a small medikit. Now for a hard puzzle. Turn left and watch the **rolling wheels** go past. Wait until they just go past you to the right and slide down the slope. Turn and run left to just by the side of one of **the faces** (astride the line between a red and black square with the red to your left), now crouch down. The wheels roll back up, but just miss you. You now have time to hit the switch and crouch back down. Wait for the wheels again, and then go and do the same with the other face. Wait for the wheels, then turn around and move to the top of the slope and wait for them to come up, a well-timed jump takes

you over them and you can repeat the trick on the other side of the room. When you've hit all four switches, the door on the opposite side of the room to where you entered opens.

Run through it. Haul up and slide down through. When you land in this room go to the far left corner immediately and pull out the block. That stops the spikes from getting you. Now pull all three levers to open the door. Then fall backwards, grab and drop through the hole that's on the other side of the door. At the bottom, turn around and slide down into the **boulder channel**. To your left at the end is a lever to open the door. When you've pulled it, walk back towards the door. Notice the different colour block in the floor. As soon as you touch that the boulder starts to roll, so dash to the door from that point. Then turn right and keep dashing because there's **another boulder** on its way.

Your troubles aren't over because there're three blow-darters waiting for you down here. Dispose of them.

You're back at the spot you started the level from, only now the gate to the left of where you came in is open. Anyway, go down the slide and there's just **the boss** to defeat. In front of you is a **chair** that will swivel round when you get near it. Before you do there are two small medikits to collect: one to the left and one to the right.

Don't use them now, unless you're poisoned of course. Approach the chair with your best weapon ready.

When it swivels round jump backwards while firing, then keep jumping left and then right without stopping while still firing. Eventually there'll be a blue explosion.

Collect the **Ora Dagger** and **the level ends**.

■ Eery isn't it? Lara's visits to the temple don't often end in quiet prayer.



KICK ASS AT... TOMB RAIDER III

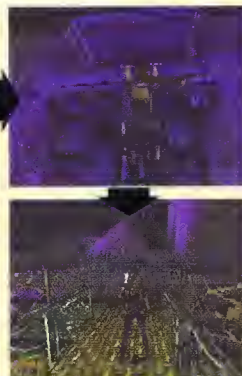
LONDON

■ London survived the Blitz, but whether it will survive Lara's a different question entirely.



THAMES WHARF

To get your hands on some extra goodies on this level, walk on to the bridge near the top, turn around and long-jump over the roof top (it can be done). Follow the passage to the left and you can pick up the **savegame crystal** and shotgun shells at the end. Back the other way, climb up on the block, go right, haul up on to the roof top, go forward and jump down on to the crane. Run along the gantry to the gap in the railings.



Turn left and drop down on to the counter-weight. Lower yourself backwards over the edge and drop down to the roof.

Slide down to a ledge. Walk off, taking care to avoid the **barbed wire** you'll find at the bottom.

In the middle there is a passageway – go down it and round to the right for some secret goodies that are guarded by **two rats**.

Back out, left to the end, walk into the barbed wire and haul up. Left, haul up and then climb up to the platform on the right. Back on to the counter-weight, and haul back up on to the crane. There's a long-jump diagonally to the right. Along to the end, short-jump to the

platform, left, jump and haul up, then slide down.

Haul up to the right, haul up again and long-jump back over the rooftop to slide down right by where you started.

Next move forward to the edge of the last platform. Turn around and drop backwards off the edge. Grab, drop, then jump immediately forward to a ledge. Shoot the **raven**.

Throw the switch here. Jump up and grab the ceiling, go across towards the **zip wire**. Drop down at the end, grab the zip wire and go across to the other side. Slide down, grab, release and grab again. Shimmy right and watch the **sniper's** movements. When he heads away from you, haul up and shoot him. Forward and hard left, and throw the switch.

Back out, grab the small medikit from the corpse and then head into the abandoned warehouse. Go left to the end, right and jump to the ledge.

The second block crumbles, so beware. From here, shoot the two rats on the far side (you may have to drop off and climb back to disturb them). Run over the **collapsing platform** and jump to where the rats were. Follow the long corridor around to the right, shoot the sniper at the end and collect the **Flue Room Key** from

him. Head out and face in to the room. To your far left on this ledge is a drop down to a platform. Drop backwards and grab. Drop down towards the platform, but grab the other, hidden, platform on the way.

Haul up, go to the end and hit the switch, go back round and down to the platform below. Through the crawl space here you can get **harpoons**.

Back out and a long-jump to a sloping ledge on the same wall. Haul up here, head to the end, turn right and walk to the highest edge.

Jump up, grab and haul up to the warehouse entrance. Back out to the alley and drop down where the green block has moved. On to a new ledge, shoot the raven and haul up to the first visible crawl-space.

Go left and right into **the flue**. Get out at the end, jump over and flick the switch. Jump back and go straight through the flue. At the end, drop out backwards, down the slide and on to a crate. Kill the sniper that you'll find down here.

Go over to the far side of the alley and there're some flares and a **savegame crystal** in the corner behind the crates. Back to the other side and climb up the crates to the left. Jump and grab to the ledge and climb up the wall

here. Drop off at the platform and up the other climbable wall. Round to the left and you'll see a third wall to climb.

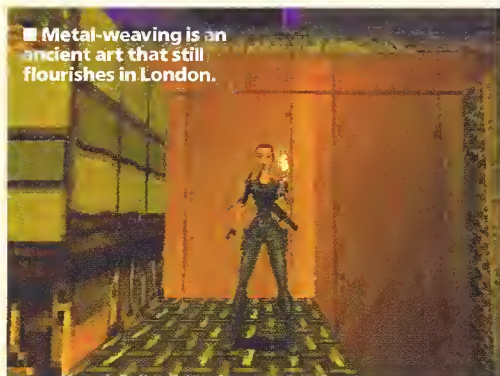
At the top, head straight forward and jump across to the lower of the two platforms, then go left and long-jump to the other side of the alley. Go right, drop down and collect the **small medikit**. Face the wall, jump up and grab and shimmy to the far right. Haul up and follow round to your left. At the end (**Point A**) go down the passage to the right.

Follow it round to the end and long-jump over. Left, haul up at the end and shoot the raven. Hit the switch up here and grab the **large medikit**. Back out and jump over the gap, turn right and jump down to the **painter's platform**. Kill the raven. Jump over to the doorway, pick up the **flares** and use the Flue Room Key to open the door.

Drop down, run forward and get the **savegame crystal**, left and hit the switch. Back out, dodging the flares. Back down to the painter's platform, work down to the left and go back through the flue. Down to the floor and work all the way back up to **Point A**.

Shoot the sniper down the passage. Instead of going

■ Metal-weaving is an ancient art that still flourishes in London.



down the passage, haul up at the end. Follow this passage round to its end, then jump forward and grab and haul up for some **shotgun shells**. Turn around and jump back. Now let yourself gently down the hole at the end.

Go down the slide and jump over and grab (from the back of the platform) at the bottom. Haul up, down the next slide and collect the **savegame crystal**.

Go left and follow the passage down, picking up a large medikit. Ready a gun and go down the third slide, killing the rats at the bottom. Keep your gun out, drop down the hole into the **switch room** and turn left to shoot the soldier. Hit the only available switch in this room and run down the passage out. Go down to the far end and right, along and into the water.

Swim straight down for some **Uzi clips** and a small medikit. Then pull the neon-lit lever. Head out into the long passageway, all the way back to the entrance and hit the available switch again.

Go back down the passage and then first right to the end. Down into the water and through the open door in the bottom. Let the fans slow down and swim through past them. Surface to the left, haul out and ready a weapon for killing the **soldier**.

Head up the slope, pause by the crawl-way to the right and shoot the rats running down it. Along to the end of the passage and pick up the shells. Now go through that crawl-space you saw.

Go out at the end and pick up the small medikit. Along to the end, then drop down, turn around and go through the doorway. Avoiding the machine down here, go into the middle and see where the **blue panel** is (in the recess you were shown when you entered the room). Go down to the far right, pick up the **savegame crystal** and carry on to the **light switch** round the corner. Turn the lights on. Back to the other end of this large chamber and (keep an eye on the **robot**) pull out the cage at the end.

Push and pull it until it's at one of the intersections by the blue panel. Wait for the machine to burn out against the panel. Exit the chamber and climb up all the way to the

first room you dropped into. Hit the new switch and kill the **sentry** who comes down. Hit the other switch. Down to the second pool at the far end of the long corridor. Dive in and haul out at the **red exit** on the other side.

Run to the third **pool**. Swim over to the ledge on your left, haul out and kill the guard. Go into the room and hit the switch on the far side. Now go all the way back to the start of this section to hit the newly-revealed switch.

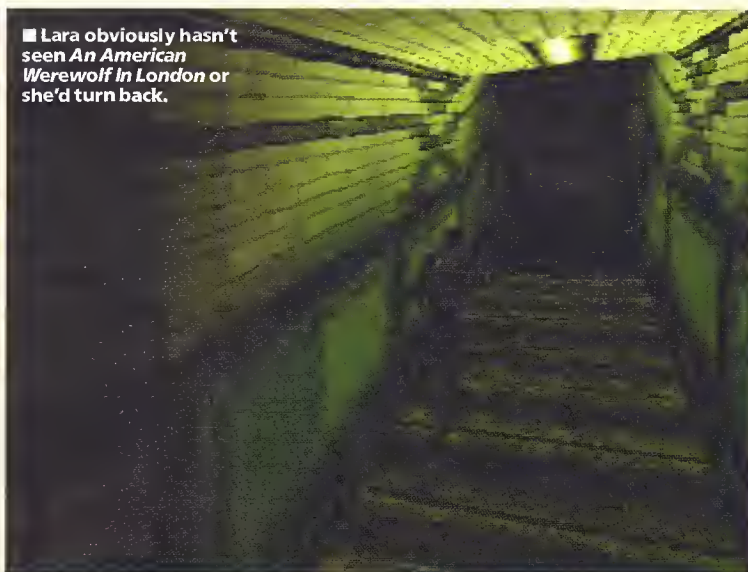
Go out to the third pool, left along the **gantry** and, in the middle, jump up and grab the ceiling. Swing along, left and then right to the end and drop down. Kill the rats coming from the right. Go into the little crawl-space and get the small medikit. Run along to the other end of this passage, collecting the **savegame crystal**. Right at the end, pick up the large medikit and drop into the second pool. Climb out, shoot the guard and go back to the switches room. Hit the new switch and make your way back to the third pool. Dive in and go all the way to the bottom, go through the hole and swim all the way along the tunnel, going left at the first gate. There's an opening at the end. Surface for air. Dive back and get the **shotgun shells** and small medikit from behind the alcoves on one side. Haul out at the passage on the right at one end of the pool, kill the sniper and gain a small medikit.

Collect the **savegame crystal** from the alcove to the left. Jump over the barbed wire, grab and climb up to the top. Walk through the barbed wire to the middle of this ledge, turn left, jump and grab the platform. Haul up, turn right and long-jump, grab and haul again.

Walk through the barbed wire to the right and jump up to the platform. Walk left along the roof and haul up at the highest point at the far end. Turn right and walk over the roof top, slide down and go to the far right at the bottom. Lower to where there's no wire. Walk to the end to get yourself some **goodies**. Back to the roof and you need to get the sniper. Haul yourself up from the apex.

Go left along the ledge, get the sniper. Carry on when you get to the far side, jump down and then **the level ends**.

■ Lara obviously hasn't seen *An American Werewolf in London* or she'd turn back.



ALDWYCH

After you've hit two slopes, grab and haul up for some **shotgun shells**. Drop in the water, haul out and go up four flights of steps. Go left and kill the **torch-bearer**, for a small medikit. Go out into the ticket hall. Climb on top of either of the two left-most ticket booths to get **shotgun shells**, **Uzi clips** and **flares**, and a block to pull out in one corner. In another corner is a drop down, do it then let yourself down the next drop, and climb down the ladder to the **savegame crystal**.

Haul up to your right, shoot the window and go back up the stairs to the ticket hall. Go down the right-hand set of **escalators**. Drop down to the tracks at the end.

Run to the blue light, as the train comes to you, then head down the passage to the right. Go up the slope and kill the two thugs. Get the small medikit round the corner.

Turn round and climb the crates to your right, turn right, go along and over a crate to a **savegame crystal**. Climb back up on to the crate and kill the dog. Long-jump across to your left. Long-jump to the crates opposite. Turn right,

jump up, grab and haul, pick up the **Uzi clips**. Jump down and back across. Turn round, jump up, right and grab the climbable section. Climb up and jump off backwards to a ledge.

Turn around, haul up and kill the **thug** who comes from the left. Face back the way you came, jump forward and grab. Swing along the ceiling to the right and drop down at the end. Slide down, right and haul up. Turn round, jump forward and get **the rocket** up here.

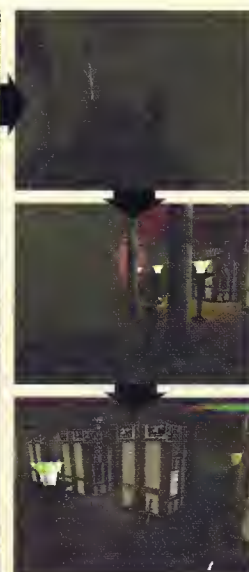
Go back down and haul up again. Save the game here if you have a spare crystal.

Drop down the slope backwards, grab, release, drop on to a collapsible platform, jump left and you'll slide down, jump and grab, release, fall through a **collapsible platform**, grab, haul-up and jump backwards to safety.

Turn round and go into the room. Drop down the hole. Go left, haul-up and go down the passage to the left, pick up the large medikit. Back up to the **all-metal room** and up through the ceiling. Jump across at this level and round the corner for a **savegame crystal**. Head back and climb up the wall. Haul-up at the top; you can stand on the edge without getting burned. Edge to the right. When the flame dies, run across and haul up to the right. Again you can stand here without burning.

Now go forward, haul up and collect the small medikit. Go left, haul up and then go left to the end. Jump and grab the climbable wall to your left. Climb to the middle and jump off backwards, hit the switch.

Back to the climb, haul-up and crawl under the flame. Get the **Uzi clips**. Turn around and lower yourself over the other side. Follow this round, hauling up twice and into the roof-space. Go left to the end, kill the rat and pick up the large medikit. Go back out and drop down through the hole. On to



the platform and kill one man and his dog. Go back down the **big hole** on to the track and towards the blue again. Head back in to the right and work all the way to the top in here, go right into the top corner and haul up through the hole.

Turn round, jump and get the **shotgun shells**. Jump forward and out, and kill the man and the dog.

In the middle of this hall is a room with some **MP5 clips**. There's also a **collapsible platform**. Fall through it and pull the block at the end. Climb out and go down the other hole. Follow along and crawl through. Haul up to the right, run along, round to the right and into a green-lit chamber. There are two timer switches here. Ignore them for the moment and carry straight on through here, up the slope and follow round into a chamber with three doors; these are the doors controlled by the **timer switch**. As you face them, number them 1, 2 and 3 from left to right. Go back to the timer switches. The left-hand switch opens door 1, the right-hand doors 2 and 3.

Each of these instructions involves throwing a switch and dashing to the appropriate door. Go into 3, and throw the switch, head out the slide at the back and along the corridor to the switches.

Now 2: haul-up on the far-side and up through the hole in the roof. Throw the switch and follow this along, go down at the end by the switches again.

Now 1, turn left inside the door, haul up, jump up, grab and swing over the water. Drop and grab on the far side, and haul up for **shotgun shells**, a **savegame crystal** and **Salomon's Key**.

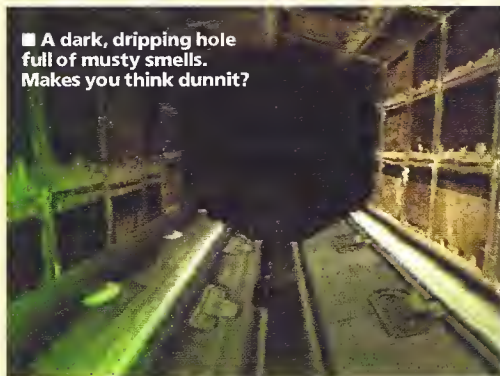
Now down into the water, and down a tiny hole tucked away in a corner of the pond, swim along and exit back into the **ticket hall**. Go on to the roof of the far-left ticket booth (as you enter the level), jump up and grab the side of the block you moved earlier.

Climb and haul up at the top. Drop down to the right, go

■ Go down Lara, down there, into that hole!



■ A dark, dripping hole full of musty smells. Makes you think dunnit?



right and lower yourself down to the ticket office.

Pick up the large medikit and the **Maintenance Key**. Flick the switch and exit into the ticket hall. Down the right-hand escalators, mind the gap, on to the platform and use the Maintenance Key on the panel at the far end.

Through the door, get the small medikit, the Uzi clips and flick the light switch. Run to the far end of the platform and get the **Old Penny**. Back off the platform and down the large hole at the bottom of the escalators. Run down the track to the blue light and into the room with the crates again.

Climb up the crates as previously, but this time, before you jump to the first climbable wall, go along these crates to the wall, drop down into a hole and flick the light switch.

Now work back round to the drill hole, drop in and across the top of the drill, haul-up on the far side and get the other **Solomon's Key**.

Go right, haul-up and round to the end. Drop down and go down to the far end and round the corner for a large medikit, back to the middle and drop down. Across the big hole, up the escalators and into the ticket hall.

One of the ticket booths has a slightly darker window, use the Old Penny and a **Ticket** appears on the floor. Go down the left escalators, kill the thug on the platform. Back off the platform and down the end there's a window to smash and a secret area to drop into. Back to the platform, down on to the rails, kill **two rats** and run right toward the purple-blue light. Kill the thug who comes out of the first door on the right. Go in the second door, hit the switch and back to the first for a **savegame crystal**, now go through the third door, over the pond and through the switch door at the end. Go first right, first right and hit the switch (If the following gets confusing, notice that the symbols by the switches match the ones on the doors and work it out for yourself – you'll find a couple more goodies if you spend the time).

Turn round. First left, first right, second left, and hit the switch at the far end. Turn around. First right, first right, turn left and down to the end for a small medikit. Back around and hit both switches in

this room. Out into the maze and first left, first left and hit the two switches in here (one for the second time). Turn around the way you just came in and go first right, first left, first left and right for a medikit. Turn around. First left, first right, first right, first left and hit the switch at the farthest end. Turn around. First right, first right and hit the switch opposite. Turn around. Through the doorway, first right, first left, first right and hit the switch. Turn around. First right, first right, first left, first right. Right again to get some clips. Then back out, right and then left at the oil painting, along the corridor and right at the end into the ceremonial chamber. Look out for both collapsible floors and spike traps in here. In the middle of this room is a **savegame crystal** and some Uzi clips. Pick 'em up. There are two keyholes in here. Use the two Solomon's Keys on them.

Through the open door, across the collapsible section and get the **Masonic Mallet**. Jump back over the pit and kill the dog. To the right is a collapsible platform, run or jump over it and go through the curtains to pick up the **Ornate Star**.

Back out, and run to the farthest corner of the room and through the new doorway to the left. Grab the flares and the small medikit, light a flare, go into the water and follow the twisty passage to the end.

Haul out, haul up to the next platform, turn round, long-jump and grab, haul up into the crawl-space, go right and down on to the platform. Turn round, haul up, turn round, jump forward and grab the ceiling. Swing left and to the end, drop, grab and haul up into the crawl-space, then go along to the end and shoot two rats.

Use the **Ticket** on the ticket barrier and up into another ticket hall. Down the right escalator and use the **Masonic Hammer** on the door at the bottom. In here, flick the switch, and go back out. Drop down, ready a weapon and go left. A door will open; shoot the **thug**, pick up his small medikit, and carry on along the passage. Jump across, and shoot the **dog** that comes round from the left. Go down there and out on to a platform with a **train**. Down to the far end of the

platform and shoot the fire-mesmerised thug who'll drop a small medikit. Pick up the **savegame crystal** and drop down on to the tracks.

Down to the rubble-filled end and crawl into a hole at the far right for goodies. Back to the second ticket hall, run round the exit barriers and use the **Ornate Star** on the ticket office door. Shoot the thug, go in and haul up at the end.

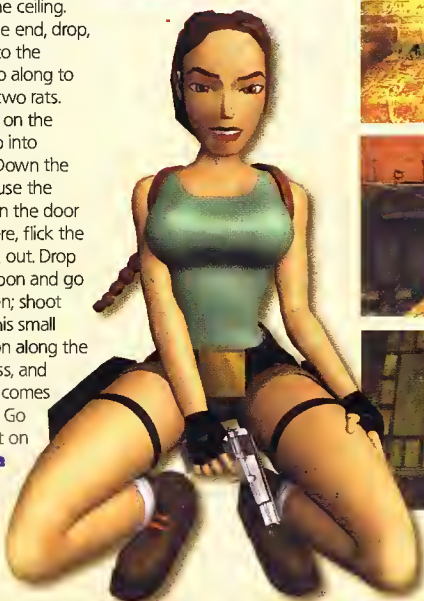
Follow the passageway, through the crawl-space and out at the far end. Drop down for the **savegame crystal**.

Go out through the door, down the steps and shoot the dog. Back up to the ticket hall, down the **escalators** and jump across at the bottom. Ignoring the platform take the last left, up over the bridge and through the open door. Turn right, drop down at the orange, left and down, and go through the crawl-space. Jump and grab up through the hatch into the train. Throw the switch up here and drop down. Head through the crawl-space and out.

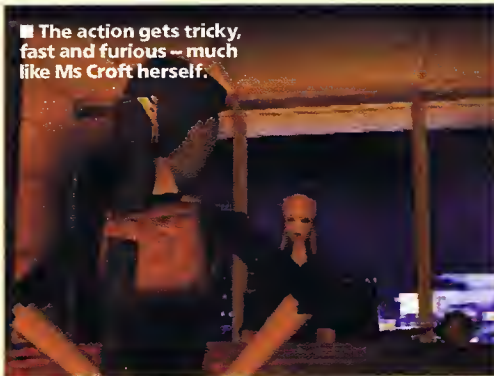
You have a choice. If you go down the first right, collect the small medikit and drop off the end, **the level ends**.

Remember this point. Or you can get another **secret room**, and it's worth it. Go to the end of the passage and right. A thug will emerge from the right. Don't kill him... yet. If you let him run away from you and round the corner he'll get his friend, who'll open a door. Wait til you hear the door open before killing them.

Go down the first bit of the slope and right through the open door. Get the **rocket** and throw the two switches. Go back into the passage, back the way you came and right at the other end. Up through the hatch and into the train, throw the switch and drop down the new hole. Head through the crawl-space and climb up the concrete block. Jump, grab and haul out to the right and go through the door to the left. Now work your way back to the hall to find a secret room stuffed with goodies, guarded by a thug. There's a switch in here that re-opens the path through the train carriage to **the level end**.



■ The action gets tricky, fast and furious – much like Ms Croft herself.



LUD'S GATE

Turn left and follow the thug down in to a room with two shallow pools. Take the left path to the end, slide down and jump and grab up in the right-hand corner before you get crushed. Slide down and drop at the end, hit the switch to your right, turn round and out to a cave. To the far right is a brick platform, drop on to it. From here drop down backwards and grab. Release, grab and shimmy to the far right. Haul up into a crawl-space and get out to the right in a secret area. Get your hands on some stuff.

In the middle there's a ledge to haul up to. Then haul up right. Turn round and diagonally long-jump to the top of the slide. Right, out of the cave, left by the switch and haul up. Climb up to just above the level of the first platform to your left and jump backwards. Pick up a small medikit, and go back to the climbable wall. Climb up and left. When Lara is just above a green section to her left, jump off backwards for a **save-game crystal** and shotgun shells.

Slide down, jump and grab, climb left and to the top, haul up. Through the crawl-space, all the way to the end and listen for the **guard's footsteps** to move away before going round to the right and getting some shotgun shells.

Back along the crawl-space, stand up in the middle and haul up to your left. Forward, ready a weapon, drop down and kill the soldier. The switch opens the door and there's another **soldier** who comes in. Pull the block out, go round the other side and push it into the corner. Out into the corridor, first right and into the **Egyptian room**. Round the back of the pillars for a small medikit. Climb up the first three blocks at the base of the central column and turn round. Long-jump and grab the ceiling, swing forward and at the end, turn left, go the edge, drop, grab and haul up for a **savegame crystal**



Jump back and grab the ceiling. Go right to the end and drop down safely. Go forward, right and haul up at the ladder.

Round the corner and in this **small room** push the block under the hole. Get up on to it and haul up left into the crawl-space. Turn round, back out and drop down the other side.

Out and back down the pillar and climb the moved **column** on the other side of the room. Jump and grab from the top to a platform, right and up into the crawl-space. Down and up again, down the slide to the right, forward and drop down. Go along the corridor to the room with the block in, move it and head back to the Egyptian room where the **movable block** has moved.

Climb up to the top of it, jump, grab and haul up, run across the diagonal to the ledge to the right and pull the lever. Turn round and jump back to the platform, drop down on to the **movable column**, long-jump and grab to the ceiling. This time go right across the underside of the dropped platform, release, grab and haul up. Flick the lever. Back out and drop, work back up to the base of the ladder and climb up. Shimmy left at the top, drop down, turn round and jump and grab to the platform to the left. Drop and grab to the platform diagonally right, and drop off. Turn right, jump, grab, haul up, turn around and jump over to get some shells and **flares**. Turn round, drop down, haul up, haul up again and round to the right. Down the short slide, jump at the end, grab and haul up. Forward, haul up to the right, turn left and walk to the top of the slide. Down the slide and jump and grab immediately forward from this collapsible platform.

Haul up and collect the **Embalming Fluid**. Through the crawl-space and collect the Uzi clips. Out at the end, ready a weapon and kill the guard who comes round the corner. Go along the corridor and into the crawl-space left at the end. Follow it through, ready for a guard right at the end.

Hit the switch in this room and go through the door to collect a rocket. Back out and down the hole in the floor behind the blocks. Face toward the **savegame crystal**, jump forward and grab. Swing along the **zigzag path** and you'll automatically drop down at the

■ While not the normal route from Ludgate Circus to Aldwych, Lara's version saves a tube fare.



■ **Difficulty levels take a real turn for the worse here...**



alcove with the dead frogman) where you'll pick up a groovy **underwater vehicle**. Use this to zoom around – you'll have to keep going back to U1 for air. In the alcove directly below the frogman (D2) is a large medikit. The alcove directly opposite that one (D5) has a **savegame crystal**. In D3, there's a lever – pull it. It opens a door in U4. This is a difficult journey. Go there and pull the lever. This opens a door in U6; go there and pull the lever. **Two frogmen** are released into the area through a new door in U8. Go through that and follow the passage round and a long way up for air at the top. Dismount and haul up where you can.

Drop into the water on the far side and turn back round. Just below where you can haul out is a lever that turns off the flames – pull it. Haul out, up to the right, turn right and jump to the platform. Long-jump to the next platform, turn left, jump forward and collect the small medikit and use the **Uzi clips**. Slide back to the platform. Long-jump to the far end. Go forward, round to the right twice and along to the end, avoiding the pile-drivers. Haul up at the end, go to the end, turn right, long-jump forward and grab. Swing along to the hole in the waterfall. Drop, grab and crawl through. Out the other side, use the **Boiler Room Key** and get the **savegame crystal** and throw the switch. Back out, slide down the waterfall and work your way back round again, but this time swing over to the far side of the waterfall. Drop down and then drop down again to the left. Pick up all those **goodies**.

Now go back to your underwater vehicle and dive down all the way back to the alcoves. The new hole is in U3, directly opposite U8, where you come out.

Don't try to catch your breath in U1, it has filled up. Go through U3, then round to the left and then all the way up to the air. Dismount. You can haul out on two sides, get the large medikit first, then deal with the devil's-own **pendulums**.

As long as you keep to one side and crouch when you land it's not too hard. There's time to make a long-jump between each swing. Head through the corridor at the far end. At the beginning of the corridor is a haul-up to the left. Haul up again. Down the slide and haul up at the bottom. Turn right and haul up again, round to the right and to the edge of a **huge drop**. Long-jump to the far side and grab the handhold. Release and grab again, haul up into the crawl-space. Crawl left and up, left again and out.

Long-jump to the **red gap**, grab and haul up into the crawl-space. Through the crawl-space and drop at the far end. Forward, haul up and down the slide, through the crawl space and **the level ends**.

■ **...and over here they just heat up to silly levels.**



CITY

Take a minute or so to admire the view and the fish before going through the door in the corner – it's the only peace you'll get for some time. Out of the door and straight into trouble as you're put under a **magical barrage**.

There's a pattern to your opponent that's worth knowing. She alternates between firing ten and 11 shots at you between recharges.

The first shot of the sequence she fires is extra-powerful and has a bigger blast radius. Use the available cover to crouch behind and try to stay on the far side of any platforms. It's also worth knowing that as you climb up, she'll be forced to move to new positions to be able to fire at you and won't be able to fire while she's doing that. Keep an eye out for the plentiful **medikits** – don't bother picking them up when you see them,

there'll be a chance to go back and get them later. One last thing, if you get lost on this level, you just have to look for the flashing light that signposts your next goal.

So, it's out across the roof top and to the slope going up to the right, run up, haul up at the end, go left, jump up, grab and swing to the other side. Drop down, left, roll and jump and grab up to the top of the **bridge** you just swung across. Run across here to the switch and hit it. Back over the bridge, left at the end, haul up and then jump up and grab through the fallen section.

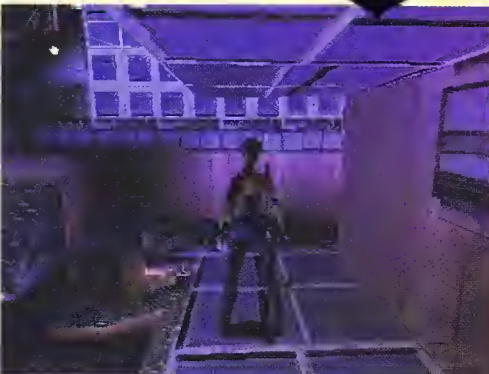
Turn round, jump across, jump and haul up. Run across this bridge and jump off to the left and grab the **climbable wall**. Climb to the top and go through the crawl-space. On the far side, stand up and turn round in safety.

Wait for a recharge, then forward, jump and grab up and carefully long-jump right to the other building.

Hide behind the **pillar** at the far end. Shoot the box on its side and your enemy will perish as the electric short circuit. Don't forget to go and collect any of the spare earlier medikits before going further. The bridge you came across is now electrified, so long-jump back the way you got here.

From where you long-jumped before, turn right and long-jump to the other building. Climb up and then turn left, long-jump from here to the other building. Along to the left and haul up. Haul up right and go left and over the **concrete block**. Throw the switch on its far side and its safe to go and get **The Eye Of Isis. Level finished**. As it's perfectly possible to complete this level in about three minutes, it may be worth repeating if you used up any ammo, medikits or **savegame crystals**, as you don't need to waste them.

■ **Leverage is a big deal in the City, it can open many lucrative doors. There's a lesson here somewhere.**



KICK ASS AT... TOMB RAIDER III



NEVADA

■ Maybe these guys don't realise who they're brutalising here.



NEVADA DESERT

Walk forward. Get your gun out and dispose of the two buzzards. In front of you are several bushes, behind the right-most is a rattler. Go through the gap in the rocks and carry on to the right of the pool and into the ravine. At the end, turn right, jump up and go right. Push the block to the left here and get the **shotgun shells**. Carry on along the passage, haul up twice. Left and haul up. Turn round, fall

backwards and grab. Shimmy to the right of the block and drop down. Kill the **rattlers** down here and pick up all the flares, small medikit and **savegame crystal**. Push the dark block through and go back out to where you dropped in. This time long-jump to the next block, then do it again. Turn right and haul up. From here run along the passage-way and out into the open air.

Walk along the path to your right, in front of the **green tank** and be prepared for a surprise. Get to the end, turn right and long-jump across to the ledge. Follow the ledge around and watch out for the

rattler in the bush at the end.

Now for a tricky long-jump over the ravine. Walk along this new ledge, short-jump across and then run off the end of this next ledge. You land on a **red-rock ledge**. Walk off the end off this one, turn right and pick up the large medikit.

Turn around and go back on to the highest part of the red-rock ledge. Long-jump and grab over to the big outcrop. Work your way up to the top, looking out for another rattler on the way.

Soon you'll be on top of the green tank. Drop down the hole and then swim along the twisting passageway until you come out in a pool. Haul yourself out and go forward through the **pointed arch**

and out on to the sandy ledge. Turn right and long-jump to the triangular ledge. Short-jump and grab from the far side to a barely visible platform. Get ready for a **buzzard**. From the edge it's just a short-jump to a square platform below.

You can walk round this ledge and then haul up at the end. Move to the highest part of the platform and haul up. From here it's a long-jump and grab to the other side. Walk left along this ledge and then short-jump to the triangle. Haul up and shoot the obligatory rattler in the bush. At the end turn right and short-jump. Take time to enjoy the **fly-past**.

Turn and face the hole. Jump off backwards and grab. Drop and grab. Shimmy along left until you can haul up. Jump and grab the **vines**. Follow them around to the right. Go right up against the wall, drop and grab. Climb left and slightly down and drop off on to the overhung ledge. Turn left and run along to the end, jump across to the climbable wall and grab.

Climb all the way up to the top and jump backwards off. From this platform long-jump diagonally across the top of the **waterfall**. From here short-jump forwards. Then a long-jump to the little platform

sticking out on the right-hand corner. Turn left and long-jump across the river, then walk around on to the sandy area. Take the left past the **pillar** and kill the rattler on the way. Where a **stalagmite** nearly meets stalactite go past to the right and carry on round. Shoot the man standing here.

When you come out on the far side of the hydro-electric turbine, turn around and climb up the two-stage ladder to the top.

Haul yourself up on to the steel, turn right and follow it round all the way to the right until you come out in the open air by a **lock**. There's a buzzard here. Climb up on to the iron post, turn left, cross the lock and shoot the obvious rattler on the other side. Keep going round to your right and jump over the two **dam** outlets.

Next to the second bush (complete with rattler) are two grenades. Now back to the locks, jump in the water, swim down to your left and you'll be able to see a lever.

Pull it, turn around and get the **Desert Eagle clip** from the new open alcove opposite.

While you're in the swimming mood, swim right out of the alcove and back to the two dam outlets round the corner to the right. At the very

■ Look closely and you'll see a lever. Pull it. Turn around, swim up and catch your breath. There's an open grille between the two **yellow metal** struts between the two dam outlets. Swim down it. There are two levers in this long passageway; one just as you enter which is above where you have to swim through and one just round a tight right-hand bend.



Both can be easily missed, so take your time and go back to the surface if you have to. When you've pulled both levers, go all the way through the passageway and you'll eventually emerge inside the dam. Run all the way along the passage and throw the **switch** at the end. Take the right-hand passage to discover the fun way out.

Back to the locks and onwards into the now-drained area ahead. Run down the right-hand side and drop into the river bed. Go along to the end and pick up the large medikit hidden round to the left. Line yourself up straight with the small medikit on the ledge on the far side and long-jump, grab and haul your way up to it. Jump back over and drop down to the far right-hand side of the **dry waterfall** to the easily visible platform there. Jump through the waterfall to your right for a rocket. From here jump down and right to the platform just round the corner below.

Long-jump over the river to the next platform, turn right and then long-jump on to the slightly sloping platform. From here drop down into the hydro-electric **turbine room**. Run right around to the other side of the noisy thing and where stalactite meets stalagmite turn right and run through the zig-zag passageway. In the room with the lift, kill the workman, then go right, turn left and over the two wooden slopes to collect the **savegame crystal**. Go in the lift and get the **Detonator Switch**. Go back out to the hydro-electric turbine room, go right and make your way back out along the riverside platforms.

Eventually you should be standing on the platform by the pillar with waterfalls on both sides. As you look out, there's a platform a long-jump to the right. Once you're there, haul up for a small medikit. Back down on to the ledge, long-jump towards the

climbable wall on the far side of the ravine and grab. Climb down, release and grab again. Haul up and jump and grab on to the climbable wall to the right. Climb up to the **Detonator Room**.

Get the **savegame crystal** on a ledge to your right and the small medikit back in the room. Follow the wires down to the TNT and get the flares from the **blue cave**. Go back up to the detonator. Use the Detonator Switch on the detonator and then get out of the way before a loosened boulder crushes you.

Back down to the now-exploded **TNT**. Climb up the two red rocks to your left as you come in. Turn right and haul up on to the square platform.

Turn around and long-jump to the triangle. Left and short-jump to the next ledge. Walk round it and haul up to your right at the end. Go through the crawl-space and take a look at the **military base**. Drop down into the valley. Run around, keeping to the right. In the middle of three bushes are some grenades. Turn so that the base is in front of you and to the left.

You can see an opening. Run towards it. Haul up to a crawl-space. Crawl through and follow the passage round.

When you can stand up, keep going forward. Where there's a drop down to the left, there's also a jump across and grab. Do the latter. Turn right, jump up, grab and haul.

Go forward and into the water. Swim round the central pillar until you see a lever. Pull it and watch a door open. Then swim down the **corrugated tube** to pull the lever on your left. Back out of the water and back the way you came until you fall down where before you jumped across. Climb back up the other side (to where you jumped from) and back out to the military base. Run past the perimeter wire and turn left at the end.

Keep running towards the big opening in front of you. Slide down into it, turn left and go through. Just as it opens out there are **two rattlers**. Ignore the door for a minute and go right round the outcrop in the middle and read the signs. Back to the door and through.

Throw the switch. Now back to the military base clearing (there are two red

rocks to climb and then jump up where you just slid down). Go right at the perimeter fence and back into the passageway with the crawl space.

This time drop down when you get to the hole in the floor. Go right and crawl through to your left. Take out the two unarmed **bozos**.

Over at the far side of the structure is a ladder, climb it. Go through the doorway, swim round and climb up.

From here it's possible to use a **grenade launcher** (if you have one) to take out the guards in the compound. Otherwise just long-jump through the gap. Now you're in the compound.

Kill the guards from this position. Then drop down and run round to the right. Keep going until a **plane** flies past. Go right into the warehouse -- there are two guys in here. Climb around the packing cases for a small medikit. Back down to the ground and get on the **buggy**. Use it to get up on the roof of the main building, via the steel ramp, where you'll find the **Generator Access Card**. Go back down the ramp and drive right round the building. Get off by the grey slab. Climb up it and go into the pool room.

Shoot the guy. Go through and into the office, turn right and use the Generator Access Card on the slot at the end by the door. Shoot the guy who comes out of the now-open door. Go through and use the switch. Back out and on to the buggy and drive to the front gate. Dismount and flick the switch to open the gate.

Drive left and back down the large opening, left at the bottom and drive fast up the outcrop in the middle of the clearing and then jump over the fence. **Level completed.**

■ How many channels can you get on this?



HIGH SECURITY COMPOUND



You start in your cell facing the door. Turn around and jump up to the window, triggering the laser sensors. As soon as you do this a guard will enter your room.

Turn around, jump over him and head out through the door. Sharp left and dash along the landing to get some distance away from the pursuing **MP**. Once you're far enough away from him (you may have to go downstairs and back up again) hit any of the switches on the landing. These open the cell doors. A prisoner will come out and kill the **MP** for you.

Now for the jailbreak. Open all the doors. Notice from the writing on the walls that this is **Bay C**. In the cell diagonally opposite the one you started in, is a passageway above the sink. Jump into it and push the block forward. Crawl through to the left. Go through and push the other block forward. Turn right and push the first block back to its starting position. Now there's a hole in the ceiling. Haul up through.

Run forward, long-jumping over the **barbed wire**. Along to the end, walk through the barbed wire and pull the switch. Turn left, haul up, walk left to the top of the ladder, turn, drop down backwards and grab, and start going down.

Before you reach the bottom there's a **passageway** to your left. Drop into it, turn around and follow it along to the end, jumping over the black square in the middle.

At the far end is another black square. With the source of light to your left, walk back on to this. When it collapses, run diagonally to your right (ignoring the shooting guard)

and hit the switch on the wall opposite the radar display.

This releases the prisoners into this area where they'll overwhelm the guard. Find the guard and get the **Keycard Type A** and a small medikit. With the transparent wall to your right, you'll see a gate.

Use the keycard in the slot to the right. Go into **Bay D**. Run all the way to the end and turn left. Hit the switch at the end and go through the door into the **washroom**.

At the far end is another switch and door. Go through. As you enter this room, you can see that there's a hole in the ceiling straight ahead of you. There's a movable block in here which, by alternate pulling and pushing can be moved round a column and under this hole. Do so. Climb up in here, jump over the pipe to your left and throw the switch.

Back down into the now water-filled room and swim over to the farthest corner where there's another **hole** in the ceiling you can now swim up. Haul yourself out at the top, run down the corridor and jump right over the hole that leads into the **flame-pit** (actually it's the kitchen range from the canteens).

Follow the corridor around to the right and drop down at the end into the open air. Run all the way along here, jumping over the two barbed-wire pits on the way.

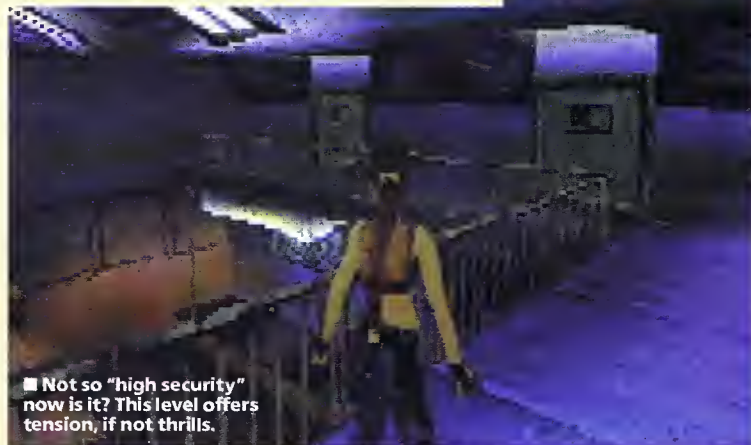
At the end go right and drop down. In this room is a switch. Flick it, but ignore the door it opens; instead go into the **yellow area** and hit the switch that turns off the kitchen range. Head back out and haul up where you just came from. Work your way back to the drop above the kitchen range.

Drop down and run through the kitchen picking up the **small medikit** on the ledge to your right. At the far end is a switch which opens

■ The High Security Compound offers few problems with these tips.



KICK ASS AT... TOMB RAIDER III



■ Not so "high security" now is it? This level offers tension, if not thrills.

the door there. Go through. There's a door to your left and right here. Open the one to the right first. Then the one to the left; an MP will come through. Lead him back to Bay C (the main prison area) where the prisoners will take care of him for you. Take his small medikit.

Go back to the door the MP came through. Throw the switch in this room and the grilles by the fan in the kitchen will open. Go into the kitchen. Climb up by the fans and carefully get the **savegame crystal**. Turn and face the middle fan, jump backwards, slide down and grab. Shimmy left and drop. Turn left and haul up into the crawl-space. Crawl through to the left. When you can stand up, climb up the ladder in front of you. At the top, shimmy left and drop into the corridor. Move along this **dead-end** passageway and one of the prisoners will throw a switch for you, above that opens the trapdoor at the top of the ladder. Get back on to the ladder and climb up and haul over. Welcome to **Bay E**.

Turn right and follow the passageway along. Go right at the end, then left and climb up the grille in front of you. Haul up at the top and collect the small medikit to your immediate right. At the top of the big slope is a guard patrolling. Wait until he walks off to the left and then run up the slope and go to the right.

Head straight across the open area and through the gap with the **silver crate** to your right. Go left to the end and then right to a hole in the floor. Drop down on the left-hand side and keep going down into the passageway.

Flip the switch on the far side of the left-hand door and release the prisoner. Follow him back up. He'll take care of the MP for you. Pick up the **Keycard Type B** from the corpse. Go and use it in the slot by the door in this area. Go through and to your right, and collect the large medikit and the Uzi clips. Throw the switch in the room. Back out and through the gap with the silver

crate again. This time turn right. There were **laser trip-wires** here but you've just turned them off. Run through and to the left to the hole in the floor. Turn round, jump backwards down and grab. Shimmy to the ladder and climb down.

Wait around a corner in this room until the patrolling MP goes away to the right of the exit. Run out and left, down to the end and use the switch to open the cell door on your left.

Two prisoners will rush out and do him. Over to his body and get the **Yellow Security Pass** and flares. Head out into the large open area and run down alongside the fence to the right. At the end is an **automatic sentry**.

Before it draws a beam on you, duck into the last alcove on the right and use the Yellow Security Pass on the control box. Go through the opened door and down the passageway past the **hangar**. Left at the end and U-turn down.

Crawl down this passageway so that the MP at the bottom doesn't see you. Go through the crawl-space to the right and follow it round. Drop down at the end and then right and run along. Drop down here, turn left and run to the switch at the end here. The guard will see you. Throw the switch and he'll be toasted by laser.

Turn right, jump over the **laser beam** and carefully go through the door and down the passageway into Bay C. Follow it all the way to the end where it opens into a large area. Turn around, then jump backwards, grab and release to get down safely. Turn around and go left and then follow the platform all the way round to the right.

At the end, turn left and jump down into the passage below you on the opposite wall. Follow this all the way to the end and drop down into the control room. Throw the switch at the far right of the window and watch the **satellite dish** move. Turn around and go to the far side of the room where there's a switch and a door. Throw the

switch, go through the door and back right along the corridor, and down and around until you're back where you jumped across and then down to the passageway to the **control room**. From the end here jump up and grab the ledge and haul yourself up to the top where the satellite dish has moved to reveal a hole.

Fall down the hole and you'll land in some water. There's a current in here — to beat it swim forward into the middle and then up. Don't be tempted to pick up the **savegame crystal**.

Haul yourself out at the platform above. Turn so the wall's behind you. Now turn 90° left and jump across. Run up to the top of this slope. Turn right and run along to the end. Jump to the **triangular platform**. Slide down to the triangular platform below. Turn and jump to the square one. Long-jump to the far triangular platform.

Right and jump to the exit. Crawl through and go out right. Stand and follow the corridor round. Pull the **lever** at the end. Work your way back and into the water. There's a tunnel out in the corner of this room; swim along it, picking up the small medikit on the way. To the end and turn left.

Crawl through and wait until the MP passes to the left before coming out, standing up and running round right and following the passage left.

Through an open doorway there's a switch to the left that will close the door and trap the guard on the other side. Just round to the right from this switch is a ladder; climb up and haul over at the top. Next run forward and out into the base of the **satellite dish tower**. Run round to the far side and up the ladder there.

At the ladder top, go up the passageway and right, the guard to the left won't notice you. To the end and right and haul up into the crawl-space and get the Yellow Security Pass from the end. Go all the way back past the base of the tower and down to where you

locked the guard out. Go the other way to an **observation room**, use the Yellow Security Pass on the control panel. Now go back to the tower and drop down the hole in the middle.

Back in the pool of water, get a lungful of air before diving down and through the hole in the middle. Collect the **savegame crystal**. Swim along the passage, pick up the flares as the tunnel narrows.

Pull the lever after that, through the door, along and into a pool. Before you surface, swim to the left hand side to avoid the **lasers**. You'll pass a small medikit on the way in here that you can pick up now or retrieve later.

Haul out on to the platform and jump over the lasers to the platform on the other side. Go down and through the water here, swim to the end. Haul up to your left and crawl forward.

Out and immediate left, haul up on the crate here. Over to the far side of the crates, flick the switch and through the door. Collect the large medikit, pistols and **Desert Eagle**. Go back out, but remember — with goodies comes a trap. Notice those green lasers? Cross them for a murderous hail of bullets. Draw your gun and approach them carefully, then autotarget on the threat and take it out.

Back over the crates and run up the slope out of the main area. Have a gun ready. Shoot the MP. Up to the right and be prepared for three more. At the top of the slope is yet another, and he has a dog too. Pick up the **Blue Security Pass** from the corpse.

To the left of where you came up is a gate. By there is a small passageway into a dark room with a large medikit. Back out and right and right again to the top of the slope down. There's a **ladder** to the left. Climb up, U-turn round and use the Blue Security Pass on the door at the end of this passage. Through the door and into a room with two switches and an MP. The obvious switch to your right opens a gate and lets an MP and a dog in below.

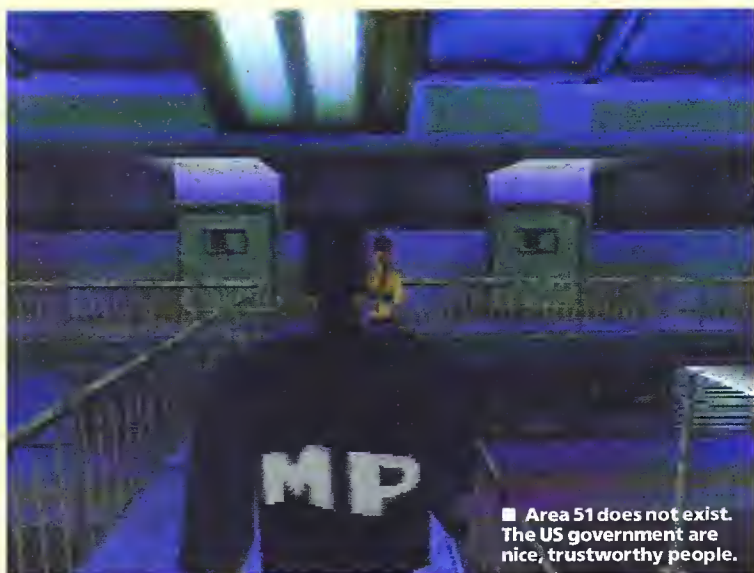
To the right again is another switch that you want to flick. This gets the conveyor belt going. Run out and down the slope to the **conveyor belt** — keep going down to the left. At the end of the conveyor belt is a crate. Climb up on to it and haul yourself up on to the ledge via the short ladder. To the right is a ceiling grille that you can jump up and grab.

Go out into the middle of the room and turn right at the crossroads. All the way across and drop down. Haul up through the hole in the ceiling to your right and kill the MP. Get his **Yellow Security Pass**. Go to the other side of this room and get hold of the **savegame crystal**. Work back down to the floor below by the way you came. At the far side is a control panel on the rightmost of two structures either side of a gate.

Use the Yellow Security Pass on the panel and go through the now-open gate. Run down and right, right again and out into an area with a truck in it. Shoot the MP. Run past the **truck** and up the slope to the left. Kill the other MP. Go into the warehouse. To the far right as you come in is a movable block; pull it out for an Uzi clip and a grenade. Over on the other side of the warehouse is a stack of crates with a hole in the middle with some Desert Eagle clips and a small medikit. Now go into the back of the truck (from inside the warehouse). **Job done.**



■ So many routes, so little time, so much ammo.



AREA 51

Out of the back of the truck and climb left over a crate for a small medikit. Back out and run toward the main area. shoot the MP before he triggers the defences. Go left to the far end and into the room to the left to collect an MP5 and two clips. Leave the switch. Run back to the hall and hit the switch on the right-hand wall. Go through the crawl-space, pick up the large medikit to your right and then haul up into the next crawl-space. At the end keep crawling out, turn left and once the lasers have gone behind you, crawl into the darkness at the end where there's a large medikit.

Turn round, crawl and follow the lasers back into the middle (lowest) part of the passage. When the lasers have gone back over your head, stand up and run to the ladder at the end.

Climb up, haul up and then haul up again into the next crawl space. Stop about halfway along and let the guard walk past the end (he mustn't spot you). The moment he's gone past crawl out quickly, get to your feet and drop him with the Desert Eagle before he gets a chance to activate the lasers.

Turn left and hit the switch. In the now open room is a prisoner — leave him be. Turn round. Behind the open door to the right is a small medikit.

Go back out into the hall — in the middle is another crawl space to the right. Go through here, get the flares. Forwards, haul up and crawl through again. On the other side stand up and admire the lasers and automatic guns that would

have killed you if you'd come the obvious route. Out the other side of this room, turn right and drop to all fours.

Crawl up the slope to behind the box on the right. Draw your Desert Eagle without standing up. Pop up and kill the MP before he hits any switches. Climb over the box and go right to collect some Uzi clips and a rocket. Back into the corridor, around to the right and hit the switch by the double gates. You'll drop through the floor.

Prepare a weapon, run round to the left and deal with the sniper before he shoots or hits any switches. Two dogs will rush you. Just here is a green crawl-space containing a grenade launcher. Farther round are some shotgun shells lying on the ground. Around the central column of this structure is a pit with a grille walkway. Work round until you can see a switch, then go down and flick it. Run round and one of the corner grilles will give way.

Draw a weapon and deal with the onrushing MP. Walk around down here. Two crawl-spaces have opened. One is a secret area with a savegame crystal, get it.

Now crawl through the other exit. At the end, go right and get the MP5 clips. Now turn around. When you step on the grille on the other end of the "T", it will collapse.

Wait until the MP has walked underneath away from you before walking on to it. Drop down and then blow his brains out. He'll drop a small medikit for his pains.

Head down the corridor towards the orange end, throw the switch round the corner and help the prisoner take out the two MPs who come to see what's going on.

Now back up the corridor the other way, across the transparent floor to the end and take out the two

automatic guns to right and left (or save the ammo if you'd rather not). Turn back round, go along and then right into a crawl-space. On the other side there's a large medikit. Drop down in front and get the shotgun. Out into a corridor, left and down. At the bottom go left again, draw a weapon and rush the sniper at the end.

Throw the switch near where he was standing. Back down the way you came. In the middle to the left is a tempting doorway. This is a nasty ambush. Behind double doors to the left and right hide two snipers. Draw your Desert Eagle and move towards the door. As soon as it slams shut start jumping backwards. Wait for the lock-on and fire three times. Lock-on and fire three times again. They should both be dead. One of them drops a small medikit.

Be wary of the snipers, even when they go down they'll keep shooting for a bit. In one of their hidey-holes is a switch that opens a crawl space in the other. Go through it, left and out. Charge through the alarm beams and get the MP who comes running down. Left and up, and go right at the top. Ready a weapon, there's a sniper ahead. Into the rocket room. Go right and drop down. Go right round the rocket, ignoring the exit for now. There's a ladder on the far side — climb it.

Get off on the sniper's ledge and collect the Code Clearance Disk from his body. Drop to the floor below, and go back up the ladder you first came down. Back down to the intersection and go straight ahead, following the way you've not been before.

This opens out into the missile loading bay. Notice the automatic gun and the two green trip-lasers that make a cross. Avoid them while in the room. Go round the ledge you're on to the ladder and



follow it down. At the bottom, turn right around and face into the room. To your left now is a dark area past two missiles — down there is a small medikit. Back into the room and then jump over the two beams to a strange-looking orange machine set in the wall.

Use the Code Clearance Disk on it. Go and climb up on the platform with a swinging hook. Against the back wall is a dodgy looking grille. Climb up and through it, down a passageway, backwards drop, grab and climb down a ladder, then along a passageway for a savegame crystal.

On the way back you'll have to shoot out the grille and this will alert the automatic gun. Dodge out of the way and let it calm down again. Once you're back in the room, it's an easy run past the hook to get the shotgun shells at the end.

Drop down and climb on the conveyor belt between the two pink lumps. Now you can long-jump across to the ladder between two rockets. Do so, climb up it and get off to the right at the top. Turn round. Over in the far corner is a sniper — kill him and get the Hanger Access Key (sic). Go back down, out of this room and into the rocket room again. Drop down and take the floor-level exit out. Run past the hole in the floor and follow the passage-way around until you come to a control panel. Use the Hanger Access Key.

Go through the open door walking, with a weapon ready. Sneak up behind the MP on the train platform and kill him. Drop down where he was standing and go left. On no account climb on to the monorail — it's electrified.

Go left to the end, climb up the ladder and hit the switch in this room. Go back down and crawl underneath the rail. Go right as far as the car and up the ladder to your left for shotgun shells. Back out to the edge and jump on to the roof of the car. Go to the front, jump up, grab and haul yourself up. Go along the passage. The first grilles are safe to walk over, the second set collapses. Jump, grab and cross using the ceiling. Time the laser to move away and drop down at the far end. Go to the end of the passage-way, jump to the ladder and climb down. Turn around and long-jump to the platform. Draw a gun and shoot the

guard. Jump down by the rail and get the shotgun shells. Back up to the platform. Take the long passage out of here, up the slope at the end and kill the sniper. Check out the UFO to your left. Along the hallway, jumping the three green trip-lasers. Left at the end and ready a weapon to take out the automatic turret at the far end of this stretch.

Left again, climb up the crates and drop down. Round to the right, take out the MP and the sniper from the entrance. Into the centre and take out the automatic turret. If you didn't get the MP quickly enough, watch out for the yellow trip-lasers.

To get out of here you must climb the central control bank, jump up to two gantries and hit the timer switches. You want to go right and then left, as you face the entrance. The first time you flip each switch, a sniper will appear. Kill them. When you hit the switches a set of double doors opens. Through those, up some steps and a row of switches to the left. Kill the sniper lurking in this room first. Back to the switches, throw them all. Leave this room via a door behind the switches to the left.

Back through the control room and out where you first came in. Follow the passage all the way to the UFO, that you can now get to.

As you enter the UFO room veer right. There's a switch on the far wall, flick it, and climb up the ladder. Near the top you'll get a change of camera angle that will show a platform behind you; climb a bit more to be sure and jump off backwards. Turn around, pick up the shotgun shells and then work your way around the rafters anti-clockwise so that you can make your way to the iron platform on the other side of the room, from where it's an easy jump down on to the UFO. Pick up the Launch Code Pass.

Out of the UFO room and back all the way past the train area to the room with the hole in the floor next to the rocket room. Drop down the hole and open the door at the end with the switch. In the next room use the Launch Code Pass on the slot. A button is revealed. Go to it and get ready. Press the button. Jump back, jump left, jump back, roll and dash through the door and away

from the advancing flames.

Go all the way back up through the rocket room, up through the hole in the floor and back into the next level up from the rocket room. Take the ladder to the right, go all the way up, drop off at the top and kill the MP. Run round, use the switch and open the door. Crawl through to the crawl-space. Follow the rolling lasers in, stand up and jump over them as they come back. Run forward and crawl through before they hit you. Get the small medikit at the end and then take the passage out.

Round to the end, haul up and take out the guard on the tower ahead. Into the open air and there's an MP to your left. Run right and down the slope to the green light. There's a sniper down here; a grenade'll flush him out.

Grab the Code Clearance Disk from him. Throw the switch down here, back up and go down the hole by the guard tower. Pass the laser by running down after it. Ducking as it comes back and then running on and round the corner left. Drop down the hole to the left and you'll be back by the train stations. Out here, turn left and go back to the UFO room.

Run straight through to the other side and use the Code Clearance Disk on the console in the Autopsy room. Turn round and look through the glass. There's a door round a corner to your left to take you in there. Get the savegame crystal and a small medikit. Back out and through the other newly-opened door. Run past the killer whale tank, get the flares and Desert Eagle clips. Back into the UFO room, climb up the big ladder again and work your way anti-clockwise around till you see a door you can long-jump through. Along the passage way, avoid the two lasers and head into the tank to collect the savegame crystal. Back out to the UFO room and get down to floor level. Go into the UFO and haul yourself up on to the next level. Kill the sniper who comes out of an exit. Go to where the sniper came from and haul up at the end. Ready a weapon — two snipers will come at you in here.

On to the raised dais in the middle and collect the Element 115. And that's it — level completed.

■ Isn't it good how the politicians are so clearly marked in TRIII?



KICK ASS AT... TOMB RAIDER III



ANTARCTICA

■ Cold, hard, brutish and short, and that's just her temper.



ANTARCTICA

Turn left and get ready to dive into the icy water in the direction of the clips you can see on the bottom. Before you jump, locate the platform you'll pull out at, right in front of the ship – you need to be quick. A proper dive will take you straight to the clips, swim over to the platform and haul out. Warm up. There's a place that from here is to the left of the **metal box** you started the level by. Swim over and haul out.



Turn round and jump to the platform in the middle of the water (the bit nearest you is safe). Turn right and long-jump to the nearest corner. Head right and haul up.

Along to the slope up, turn left and haul up, turn round and long-jump to the top of the slope. Round to the right and jump across to the bridge. Cross the bridge and jump into the passage. Collect all the **power-ups**. Back out, on to the bridge and back round to the left, then follow the path around to the right. When you come to the end, swim across to the obvious spot ahead of you. Haul out, walk forward and, when you're warmed up, swim again to the obvious platform

just to your left and to the rear of the ship.

Follow the path to the right and haul up at the end. Haul up again. Left, haul up. Jump up and grab the ceiling. Left, swing across, drop down and jump on to the **ship**. Over to the hatch in the middle and drop down. Down the slope, throw the switch, but ignore the door for now, head round to the right killing the sailor in front of you, and then the doing for the one who runs in behind once you're in the engine room.

There's a **lever** in here: pull it. Turn around, forward and down the newly-opened hatch, killing the guard on the way. Follow this corridor along to a **T-junction** where a guard appears from the left.

Carry straight on, hit the switch and go through the door. Hit the switch on the far wall. Go down either of the two parallel corridors and kill a guard at the end to get some clips. Down the hatch in here, draw a weapon, go round the corner to the left, roll, shoot the guard who's appeared behind and you'll find some **Uzi clips**. Turn around and haul up.

Move along to the end and hit the switch to release the dinghy. Turn back round and after you've gone back past the two parallel corridors, haul up. Follow the corridor round and use the switch to open the door. Out on deck and turn right and right again.

Down at the far end is a short jump from the back of the platform to a cave on your left. Go down for an MP5 clip and a **savegame crystal**. Back to the deck and round to the other side of the ship. Use the slide down here and work round to the dinghy, which is near the entrance to the level.

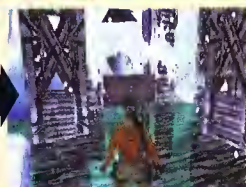
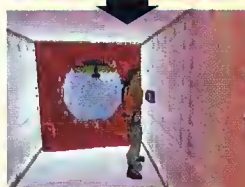
It's possible to get to the dinghy across the platform in the middle of the water here via a little triangular platform – jump straight into it. Pilot the dinghy around to your right and all the way along the side of the ship. Go round the snip at the far end and follow the

water round to the left, under the bridge and into the tunnel.

When you come out, moor by the **flag**, get out and kill the guard. Walk round by the water to the far end of the building and haul up on to the block round there.

From here there's a forward jump and grab up to the gantries. Do it, and swing along all the way to the end. Take the short section to the right before dropping down. Down the slide to your left and shoot the guard. Out at the far end and wait for the **dog** to attack you. On the diagonally opposite side of this area is an alley with some shotgun shells. If you want to, go and get them then return here.

Go through the doorway to your right and shoot the dog and the guard (who drops some clips). Follow the passage round and out. Hit the switch to your left and carry on left past the **fuel tank**. Keep going left and through the cave. Out on the open sand two dogs attack. Go carefully through the sliding doors – our fave method is to stand right in front of them and roll through, there's no faster manoeuvre. Go round and up to the left and kill the two guards; one drops clips. Into the room and to the left. First left is an **office**



area, hit the switch. Back and left round the crates, along to the end of the passage and climb up right to get yourself a **Crowbar**. A guard will come from behind you. Back through the building and the sliding doors – there's a guard here. Back through the cave and drop to where the pipe from the tank enters the ground.

Swim along to the end and haul out. Take the ladder up and follow the passage along. Don't worry about the water – it's shallow. Turn the second and the fourth wheel as you go. Collect the **savegame crystals** and climb up the ladder at the far end.

Go through the door to the right and pull the lever to start the motor. Exit this building and head towards the fire. Go past it, straight forward and into the canteen. There's an **RX employee** lying in the corner here. Be careful when you go near him, he's not very well and capable of poisoning you.

Go back out and turn immediately right after the fire. Down the passage way and out, hit the switch to open the gate and release a dog. Into the area the dog came from, and another switch opens the way to two other dogs. Kill them and go through – use the switch and go through the door. Kill the dog in here and get the **Gate Control Key** from the raised section to the right. Kill the guard who comes out to investigate. Go back out of the building, through the gates and go left.

Go through the cave at the end and shoot the guard on the other side of the hole.

Across the hole and out to the right. On to the wooden bridge and shoot the dog below before dropping down to get some grenades.

Up the ladder and go over the **bridge**. Follow the

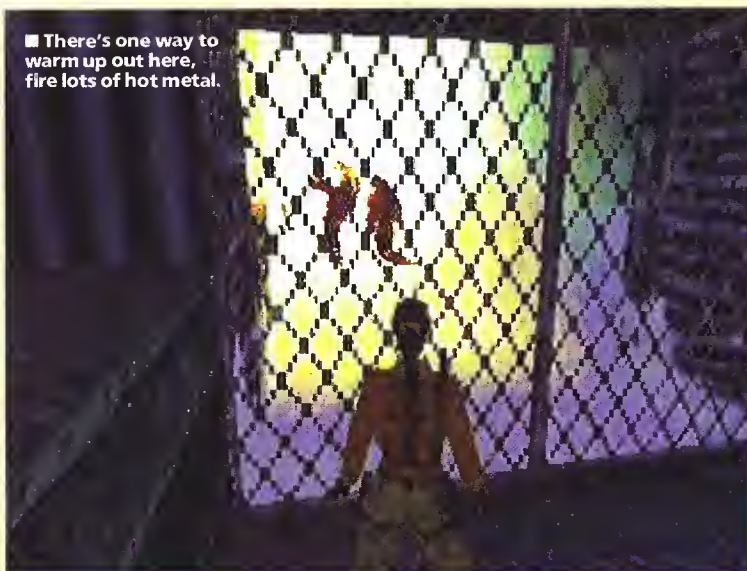
passage round and you'll come out in the clearing with the tank again. Run to the left and back up the dark passageway. Right at the top and climb up the ladder to the tower. Pull the lever and use the crowbar on the door – don't forget to pick it up afterwards, though.

Go through the door and to the edge. Jump up, grab and swing across. Drop down through the hole into the office and run through – use the **lever** at the far end to open the door and kill the sentry to collect a small medikit.

Turn right and up the dark passageway again, go straight over at the end and back out through the cave to reach the **gantries**. Jump up and swing all the way over, then walk back to where you hauled yourself out of the water. Use the crowbar on the door (pick it up afterwards). Go in and use the Gate Control Key on the board. Flick the switch. Leave the building, get back in the dinghy and go through the now-opened gate. Along the water and dock by the flag. Jump out and kill the guard. Get the **Uzi clips** and get back into the dinghy. Go along the channel. Around the next corner is another landing spot, get out here and get your hands on the shotgun shells.

Back in the dinghy and along the channel to the end where you get out again. Haul up forward and then haul up left. A guard is visible on the far side of **the wire**, and another one comes from the left – despatch him. When he's dead, go left and follow the passage round. When you get to the hole, the guard from behind the wire will come at you from down to the right. Shoot him and go down the slide there. Travel round the far side of the building, keep going round and suddenly **the level ends**.

■ There's one way to warm up out here, fire lots of hot metal.

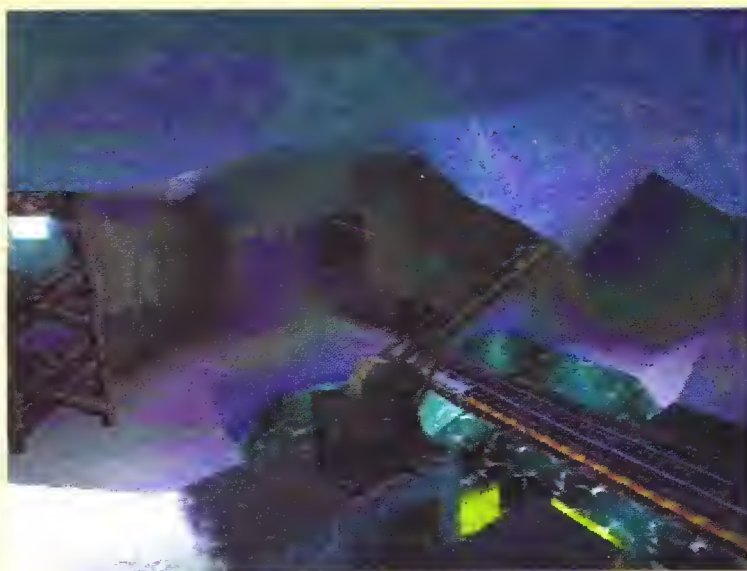


RX-TECH MINES

Go right and haul up. Head through the crawl-space and move on out. Do a complete circuit to the left – when you come through the third door and hear another door open, turn around and go back the other way. Left at the end and through the crawl-space. Climb down the ladder at the other end, collect the **MPS clips**, hit the switch and watch the grisly scene through the grille. Haul up to the new space, go round and out at the end, don't worry about flame-thrower man.

Follow the passage round to the mine cart room. Move forward on to the balcony. There are three ramps here leading to three carts. We'll number them 1, 2 and 3 starting from the far left as you stand here. 1 is along to the left, 2 is up the ramp just to the right of you and 3 is along to the right and down.

■ Mine's a large one. Oh, sorry, mines! Large ones all round thank you.



Cart 1) Hop in the cart. Up a slope and down to a jump. Up again and hit the brakes to slow down as you drop down a short, sharp slope before a bend. Down again and brake on the slope after the bridge and then let the truck go down a second slope, round a bend and over a jump.

Hit the signal and you'll stop. There's another flame-thrower man here, but again, he's harmless. Collect the **savegame crystal**.

Go through the passageway, avoiding the drills (the roll is best). Go to the far end of this chamber, jump into the corner, haul up, crawl through and drop down to the right and get the medikit. Out into the chamber again and go down to the right.

At the top of the slope, turn around and edge as far to your left as you can before sliding down backwards. Grab at the bottom, release and drop. From this platform, take a look just below you. To the right of the light is an entrance.

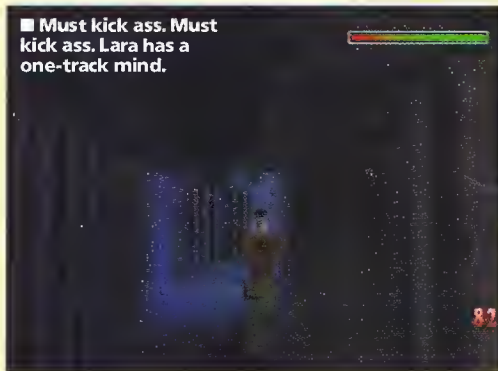


As soon as you go near it, a **huge monster** will emerge. Ready your best weapon and you're ready to go down.

Once he's dealt with, drop down from this ledge to the path below. Walk to the end that's all snow, jump forward into the right corner, down the slide and grab at the bottom. Release, drop and haul up to the crawl-space to your left. At the other side, draw a gun and shoot the **mutant** below. Go back to where you let yourself in. Let yourself out, but don't drop, instead shimmy left as far as you can, release and grab the ledge below. Now shimmy right, drop down and kill the mutant below you. Haul up to the side here, and shimmy left. Pull yourself up at the end, but beware – you'll meet a mutant coming the other way down this crawl-space. Continue through and out into a large **cavern**. Don't do anything hasty, let the flame-thrower guy in here deal with the mutant first. Wander around in here for a bit and another two mutants will appear. Let your friend take care of them by leading them to him.

Climb on to the structure above the pool and get the crowbar. From here there's a fairly difficult route out. Point back to the end of the structure on land. Just to the left is a **peak** that you can jump to. From the far end of this is a running, turning long-jump to another peak. Go all the way along the summit of this one to the very apex and it's another running, turning long-jump. Go along to the end, climb the ladder and drop off left. Crawl under the **drills** and out into the crushing room. Go past the first machine and climb up a ladder to the right. Off left at the top and run past the next **machine**. Haul up, do it again and haul up to the left at the end of the room. Left and up again, and up a series of giant steps. At the top, shoot the mutant in the passageway to the right, pull up into it, along to the end, drop down and, after you slide, run back to the cart. Get back in.

■ **Must kick ass. Must kick ass.** Lara has a one-track mind.



Up a long slope, down and over a jump, then haul on the brakes for the corner. Hit the signal, let your speed build up for a jump, duck under three bars and haul on the brakes for a bend, and back into the mine cart room. Now back toward the level entrance, pausing only to use the crowbar on the door to the right to get the **Lead Acid Battery**. Now you need to do cart number 3.

Cart 3) (Don't worry, 2's on its way.) Down the ramp to the far right and kill the mutant that's on the wrong side of the tracks. Get in the cart, up to the top of the slope, duck twice and hit the signal. Down the slope, duck and over the jump. Up the other side, duck down a slope and stop at the bottom. Get out of the cart and get the **savegame crystal**. Now go down the obvious passage. Hit the switch to the left and go through the doorway. Follow the passage round and down left. Slide down backwards at the end, grab and release at the end to drop down safely. At one end of this passage is a **grille**, at the other another over-size mutant leaps out from the right. When he's dead, go down the way he came, follow it round until you come to a crawl-space to the right. Go up it and crawl around under the floor of the passage way you just had a fight in.

Another big mutant leaps out on the floor above you – he'll have to wait. Collect the assorted **goodies** down here and crawl back out.

After your mutant's dead, continue down the corridor and right. At the end, there's a ladder; climb up and get off to the right at the top. Go to the farthest door and hit the **switch**. Along to the right and crawl through right. Drop out at the end, ignore the door here for the moment and go into the room – you'll see a huge mutant appear at a window seconds before he comes crashing through the door – he drops some Uzi clips and a small medikit when dead.

There's also a **Desert Eagle** clip in here. Through the open door, flick the switch on your left and out into a cave. From the slope down to the pool it's a relatively easy swim to the flares and Desert Eagle clips on the ledge opposite, and back.

While in the water you may notice the **Winch Starter** on the bottom. Getting to this is

probably best started with a dive from the side of the winch, as you'll get down to it quicker. It's also difficult to pick up – just hold down the **⓪** and eventually you'll grab it. Back out of the pool, through the room and to the door by the ladder. When you hit the switch another huge mutant comes at you. Open the door at the far end, jump over the hole and use the **button** on the left to open the door leading back to your cart. Get in and use the brakes down the first slope. Up the slope, duck and then hit the signal. Through the **savegame crystal** and back down into the cart room. Get out and go back to the balcony. Now do cart number 2.

Cart 2) Up the ramp, go past the mine cart to the right and cautiously into the office: there's a light switch to your right and a mutant to your left. Back out and into the mine cart. Just let it go on this first stretch, up, down, over a jump and up another slope, and duck to avoid the drills. You emerge in a **large chamber**, so pull on the brakes and get out. In the corner (to the far left from where you came in) is a jump to some flares.

Go to the platform by the winch and use the Lead Acid Battery on the panel, then use the **Winch Starter** on the back of the winch. Now look down into the pool and get ready to do some extremely hard diving.

You can see the **diving bell**, but before that is a light and a passage by it. Dive down and go through that passage, haul out at the end and warm up. Now dive again and go underneath the bell and back up into it. Warm up again. Light a flare, locate the **green lights** below you and dive down. There's a hole in the middle of the metal panel – go through it, quickly hard right, locate the surface and go for it. Haul out where you can.

There's a medikit here, which is nice. Back in the water, roll and shoot off to the left and up. Get the all-important **savegame crystal** and haul out at the top.

You're in a huge cavern, guarded by a flame-thrower man. Cross the bridge, kill the mutant, throw the switch by the big door and go through to **finish the level**, or hunt around in here for goodies – the choice is entirely yours.



LOST CITY OF TINNOS



■ **Damn their damned gas attack, it's just damned damnable.**

Through the door and into the Lost City. You're in a square. Go left. Ignore the opening in front of you for the moment and go up the ramp to your right. Drop down at the top and climb the ladder to your left.

Haul up at the top and follow the passage all the way round to the right, along and right again until you come out at an intersection with a lever. Pull the lever.

Head down the dark passage to the left of the lever and left just before the end to a ledge above the square. Take a step back and jump forward on to the pillar.

From the highest point long-jump, grab and haul up to collect the **savegame crystal** and rocket. Jump off backwards, grab and drop.

Back up the slope and through the passage that's opened between the two columns. In an alcove to the right is the **Uli Key**. Head back to the square, and all the way left to the keyhole near the double doors. Use the **Uli Key** and go through the opened passageway. Up the ladder and drop off left at the top.

Turn left and pull the lever by the grille. Turn around, take the first right, and drop on to the ledge left. Pull the lever to your left. Haul back up the way you came and go straight over and down the slide to your right. Go round to the right at the bottom and drop down into the room. Straight across and pull the lever. Out of the now-open double doors and back into the square.

Go diagonally all the way across the square, through the opening and up the ladder. From left to right, hit switches 1,

2 and 5. Drop down off the ledge and through the open gate. Out on to a bridge.

From high up to your left come a seemingly inexhaustible supply of **wasp-like** insects. Stick a rocket in their nest. At the break in the middle of the bridge, turn left, long-jump and grab across to the **savegame crystal**. Turn back to face the bridge, go along to the end and jump up to a hard-to-see platform to the left. Forward to the edge and jump, grab and haul up to another. Now long-jump, grab and haul on to the top of the bridge.

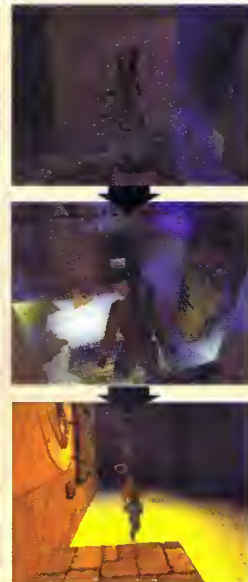
Drop backwards, grab and release to the left to drop to the bridge.

Along the bridge to the **rockslide**, and there's a jump to the left and a passage with a small medikit in it. Out, over to the other side and there's a drop down to a rocky passage.

Follow it round to the left and back to the bridge. Two very **tough demons** will come out at you; good luck. Go through the main doorway, avoiding the two swinging censers. Go into the **temple entrance** and there are three more wasps to deal with. When they're gone go left (as you face in to the temple). Run along the corridor and through the doorway to the right. Drop down left and follow the corridor round to the end. Pull the lever and go through the door. Go up the ladder to the immediate right and go round to the end.

Drop off backwards, grab and haul yourself back up. This will trigger yet another blue **fireball-spitting** demon from below. Use your height advantage to polish it off.

Now run back over to the ladder, jump across to the opposite side and do the same thing again. Back to the ladder, down to floor level and just one more to go. This little monster comes out of the gate opposite. One of the alcoves



has a lever in it (to the left of where you came in). Pull it. Now climb up the **carved block**. Jump and grab the platform and up on to the ledge. Run around, jump over the drop and go through the crawl-space on the far side. Go past the **censer** on this ledge. The easy way is to drop off backwards, grab, shimmy past it and haul up. Then long-jump past the other censer (wait until it's as far left as it can go before starting your run). Go through the crawl-space for flares and Uzi clips.

Go back out through the crawl-space and drop down to the right. Across the bridge, climb up the block at the end ignore the lever (1) down the passage. Turn left, jump forward, grab and haul up. Through the crawl-space and pull the lever (2).

Go back out and long-jump diagonally to the ledge. Do the crawl, pull the lever (3) and back out again.

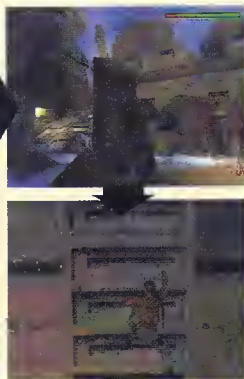
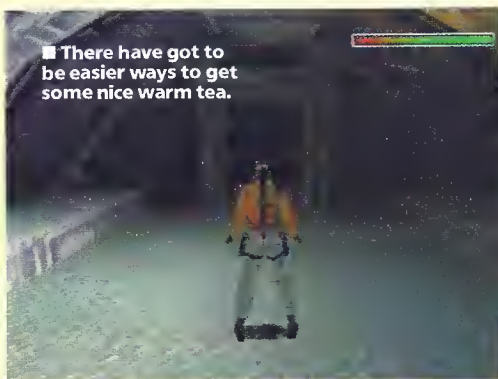
Go down to the right to the block in the corner and long-jump across. Jump forward again and drop down to floor level. Pull the lever (4) that's just above a block.

Turn left, haul up, jump forward, grab and haul up. Turn round, jump forward, grab and haul up. Pull the lever (5) and fall down. Work back up and pull lever (3), then come out, down the two blocks to the right and jump over to the platform in the middle of the wall. Now it's a sideways jump from the middle of this platform to the platform underneath the bridge.

Now jump up, grab and swing over to the lever on the far side. Pull it, turn round and jump to the new platform to the left. Jump, grab and haul up on to the bridge. Go back to (3) and pull it again.

Work down to the floor and go through the open doors into a large chamber dotted with **statues** and blocks. In the middle to the right and also in the near-left corner lurk two of the enormous demons, tempt them out and deal with them





(the blocks help as cover) In the near-left corner chamber is a ledge with a **Uli Key**. In the far-left corner is a little chamber with a ladder that goes up.

Climb it and drop off left at the top. Pull the lever, use the Uli Key on the keyhole and go through the gate. Go past the **energy beam** to the right and up some stairs. Go into the corridor to the left – a gate slams behind you. Down to the end and into the **quicksand**.

Take the right fork, and keep to the right all the way round. When you've gone about three-quarters of the way round, there's a little passage off to the right. Climb up at the end and go left up some large, rough-hewn steos.

At the top you come into a chamber with two paths off, take either (they meet up again in a second) and watch out for the **wasp** at the top. Carry on round to the left, down a slope and round a sharp left corner into a flame-lit chamber. Into the room at the end and get the **Oceanic Mask**.

Go all the way back out, dodging the falling rocks and taking care to take the left path and jump the **lava pit**.

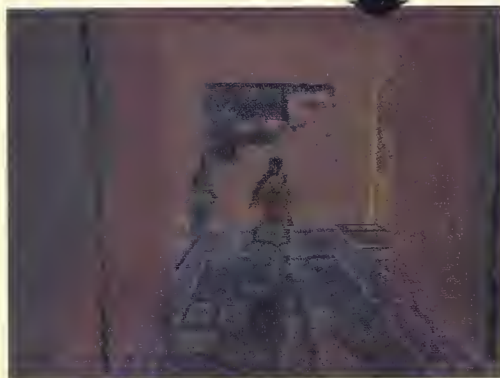
The quicksand has now disappeared, leaving a deep pit, so from the bottom of the steps, long-jump over to the far side, then jump right to a platform and long-jump to the right again.

Now you're back in the passage, jump to the ladder. Climb down, along the passageway at the bottom and haul up, then go down the slide. At the bottom it's **censer-dodging** time again. Once you're past them, null the timer lever and climb up the ladder quickly.

Turn round, wait for the trapdoor to move back up and go toward the gate – it'll open. You're back by the energy beam. Put the Oceanic Mask in one of the slots, and go back up the stairs.

At the top, U-turn and head toward the beam along the **cross-shaped platform**. Jump to the left-hand span and through the door – a gate shuts behind you.

This is the way to get to the action: from the first intersection go right, left, right, right, left, second right, left, right, left, left, right, right and right up a slope. At the top is a rolling barrel **action puzzle**. Haul up to the left. As soon as



you step on the sandy-coloured slope, the barrels start rolling toward you – you must avoid them by leaping the gap back and forth. Just jump right and left, and you should be all right.

Get the Oceanic Mask at the top and use the exit that opens. Go down the slide into a **pool** of water, dive down and through to come up in a familiar corridor. Find your way back to the energy beam and place the mask. Back up to the cross-shaped platform and take the exit to the right. Down to the end and go backwards over the edge and grab.

Time your drop through the **blades** and swim down the hole in the middle of the pool. You come through into a chamber with four exits ahead of you and there's more blades in front of them.

Swim through the left one and surface. Then pull the lever and swim back out. Swim through the right one and up to a chamber, right through two blades to an exit, down and along and pull the lever.

Back the way you came, right across the room past all six blades to the exit on the other side and the surface. Haul out, get the **Oceanic Mask**, collect the **savegame crystal** and pull the lever.

Swim back through the room with six blades, down to the lever and into the crack just by it. Right and down and you'll come out in the first room you entered. Go left and surface in the first pool. Haul out in the middle and go through the crawl-space on this platform, into the water and down for a much-needed **medikit**. Go back out, dive down into the water through the hole in the bottom of the pool and take the bottom of the four exits. Go right at the end and let the current help sweep you out. You surface in a passage. Wade

on, light a flare and into the water on the other side. Follow the passage until you come out in a room with a lever. Pull it and fall through the **trapdoor**. Back to the energy beam and place the mask. Now to the final doorway off the cross-shaped platform. Through here is a **fire puzzle**.

Light a flare and climb on top of the stone block and you'll be shown a map that's on the ceiling. **The blobs** that are shining show the route through. Memorise it (or make a map) and get down. Now do the jumps. The first two are long-jumps, the third a long-jump and grab. When you land on the third one, the flames go out on the block to your right – the only one that's so far been burning. Quickly jump over and get the medikit and **shotgun shells**, before long-jumping to the last. The second block in is a trapdoor, fall down it. Down here is a **fiendish puzzle**.

The blocks you have to leap across only appear when they're having fire breathed on them, and just before, although they're actually there all the time – they're just transparent.

Stand on the platform edge, jump forward and grab. Wait until the fire is about to disappear before hauling up and jumping and grabbing again. To get to the final one you have to do a long-jump and that has to be timed perfectly.

You may find it helps to do a roll while you're waiting for the gate to open, it'll get you through that little bit quicker. After all of that, getting past the **censer** is child's play. Get the final Oceanic Mask and go through the exit.

Back to the energy beam. When you put the last mask in place, it stops. Drop through the hole created. Down the slide and **on to the last level**



METEORITE CAVERN

The final level sees you start face-to-face with a massive spider-like mutated creature. The best weapon for this is the **Desert Eagle**. Straight from the start shoot the boss six or seven times, then start running. It moves at the same speed you do, unless you sprint, so do this for a while, turn around, and blast him a few more times. After 13-14 hits the boss will collapse. Use the time here to sprint down the nearest tunnel and pick up an artefact. Now put your gun away, and sprint back down the tunnel, just as the boss starts moving again. Repeat this tactic until you have all four artefacts. Kill the boss one more time and he will explode.

Okay, that's the hard bit out of the way. Now you have to get up to the top of the crater. Do a running jump and grab on to the ladder you can see by one of the tunnels.

Climb up, shimmy along to the ledge, and pull yourself up. Take the first left passage, and when you can run no further, crawl along it. Hop up to your left, and walk carefully along the ledge. When you emerge into the chamber turn immediately left and look up. See those **funny lines**?

You can shimmy along, so jump up, grab, then swing along them, dropping on to the stone platform. Turn right, and walk right to the edge. Turn right again, and look at the **stone block** sticking out. Do a running jump to it, turn around to your right, and climb up to the ledge.

Walk to the inside edge, and look across to another stone platform. It seems miles away, but you can make it. Take a leap of faith, then jump and grab the snow ledge in front of you. Climb up here, run past the block, and go down the slope. Get your guns ready as you run around the passage, and kill the five guards – being especially careful of the one with the **flame thrower**. Pick up the ammo they drop, and run forward. Hit the switch on the left wall and turn around. Run down between the buildings, by the open gate, follow it around, and run up to the helicopter. **Congratulations! You've just finished Tomb Raider III!** Now what are you going to do for fun?

■ That's it, you're done, finished, ended. Now it's time to face reality.



TENCHU

■ The nights had been long and painful, our eyes were bloodshot and our fingers were raw, but we'd made it. The finishing touches had been put to *Arcade 1*. Someone read through it to make sure there weren't any spelling mistakes, and we sent it to the printers by the fastest means of transport known to man (the back of *Arcade Designer Alvin's* moped). Yet, as we stood outside the office in the cool, crisp midnight air, waving Alvin into the distance and toasting "A Job Well Done" (with a can of Pepsi bought by Staff Writer Mark), I couldn't help but notice a strange, sick feeling in my stomach as if there had been some terrible

mistake that no one else had noticed. Worse still, a mistake that was my fault. The team hugged and traipsed off home for a well-deserved night's rest, but sleep was the last thing on my mind.

Weeks past. *Arcade 1* appeared on shelves in the more discerning newsagents around the country.

The phone rang...

The phone rang again...

And again...

A letter arrived.

Ten more letters arrived.

Someone demanded their money back.

The cheats we printed for *Tenchu* didn't, it seemed, actually work. They were for the Japanese version (or something). Hadn't we better, it was politely suggested, get some new ones. Someone, it was politely suggested, ought to be fired. Someone, it was politely suggested, better get his act together pronto. Gulp. Here they are, then...

CRACKING CODES

Increase item capacity to 99 on the Items screen
@, @, @, @, Right, Right, Up, Down, while holding the R2 button.

Unlock all hidden items

On the Items screen @, @, @, @, Right, Right, Up, Left, while holding the R1 button.

Increase item inventory

On the Items screens @, @, @, @, Right, Right, Up, Right, while holding the L2 button.

Restore health

On the Pause screen @, @, @, @, Right, Right, Up, Left

Unlock all levels

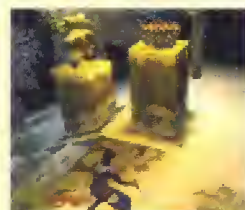
On the Mission Select screen @, @, @, @, Right, Right, Up, Right, while holding the R1 button.

Enable Enemy Layout Selection screen

On the Mission Select screen @, @, @, @, Right, Right, Up, Left, while holding the L2 button.

Enable Ayame Sexy Armour (You must play as Ayame).

At the Item Selection screen with armour displayed as an option. Left, Left, Down, Down @, @, @, @, @

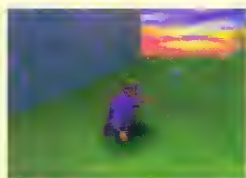


■ So, now we've satisfied all those millions of gamers who own the, erm... Japanese version of *Tenchu*, we can show just how caring we are with the beauties for the UK version you can read on the left.

SPYRD THE DRAGON



■ Contrary to popular belief, dragons are not "Ons" who like to wander around in ladies' clothing. They are in fact highly qualified "Agons" who have received doctorates.



■ I liked *Spyro the Dragon* when I wrote the complete solution to it back in *Kick Ass Arcade 1*, but I'd be blown, buggered, jiggered and shagged if I could find the third dragon in The Haunted Towers. Luckily, you lot out there were all too keen to prove my ineptitude, and wrote in in your droves, (and by "droves", I mean Richard Snow of Nottingham, Phil Gill of Sussex and Deborah Lee of Reading). Thanks to them, here's what to do:

Save the game at Lutulo in the door in the tower. Run down the arrows until you supercharge. At the bottom, in the room with all of the doors, go into the second door on the right. This should lead you to the ledge with the pond in it. (you should still be supercharged.) Keep to the left, close to the building, and jump across to the other ledge. Head up towards the whirlwind (still supercharged). Run forward into the whirlwind, which



should throw you high up into the air. When you start slowing down, use your Glide button to get to the ledge. Go into the new whirlwind which will take you up to another ledge. Enter the room and rescue Capano.

To get the remaining treasure, go around to the other side of the room. Quickly go up the steps and dodge the robots afore they wake. Glide over the gap and dodge the next few robots. The last robot, which is just inside the corridor, will try to block you, but will not kill you. Run past this robot very fast on the right side. Go through the door and there will be a red fairy. Kiss her and kill the remaining robots.



TUROK 2

SEEDS OF EVIL



■ Let's be up-front and honest here, one of our most talented staff members is in fact a six-foot cardboard cut-out of the boy Turok himself. So ever since *Turok 2* arrived in the office, we've been blathering on about getting him to write some tips for the fantastic four-player better-than-GoldenEye deathmatch. But then Acclaim sent us some, which saved him the bother. So, here they are then. Enjoy.

Without a doubt, Acclaim's *Turok 2* boasts one of the most utterly rollicking and bloodthirsty deathmatch modes in all of N64 history. But it doesn't stop there. Multi-

player *Turok 2* offers several different competitive and co-operative games across 12 expansive levels. You can even decide whether or not your weapons can harm your teammates during co-operative play. We think they should.

■ BLOODLUST enables up to four players to enter into a hardcore, kill-or-be-killed tournament. The only real rule is that, well, you've got to live to walk away when the dust settles. Bloodlust offers both Team co-operative play and Time Limit play.

■ FRAG TAG places you into another every-man-for-himself setting. In this scenario up to three opponents have to try and pound you into mushy, bits before you reach a checkpoint. If you make it, you can tag someone else as "it" and pick up a big gun.



■ It's Deathmatch Wonderland in *Turok II* as you get to guffaw at the notion of co-operative play. While you could play as a team-member, you could also go down local pool for some synchronised swimming action.

THE CONTENDERS

■ **Here's a rundown of the characters you can choose from in multi-player mode; weapons you can use; and some strategy and tactics.**

Turok

■ **The Coyote Knight**
■ **100 Health**

■ As you'd probably expect The Coyote Knight is perhaps the most balanced of all multi-player contenders – and rightly so. Our hero is agile, strong and handy with weapons. When using Turok, keep in mind the game's distinctive allowance for you to get the drop on opponents from ledges and other heights. This is especially helpful when the dude you're up against is ten feet tall. Remember, once you've used up your ammo, you've got to find yourself a new weapon.

Adon

■ **Speaker of Forever Light**
■ **60 Health**

■ Don't let Adon's relatively low Health fool you, this lady's one of the fastest multi-player

characters and her mystical abilities mean she regenerates Health rapidly. Hang back with Adon, stick and move with long-distance weapons, and you'll find good things come in bioelectric packages.

Gant

■ **The Cold One**
■ **80 Health**

■ This ruthless dinosaur employs a force field that can take quite a beating, effectively pushing his Health into the higher strata. However, he's not invulnerable, if you beat on his shield hard enough, it's like cracking open an oyster – but be quick. He can regenerate Health, but not as fast as Adon.

Flesh Eater

■ **The Death Guard**
■ **120 Health**

■ When it comes to game balance, this living horror is closest to Turok in terms of speed, strength and how much punishment he can take. If there is a downside, it's that Flesh Eater is a bit slower, but this is a vulnerability that is counter-balanced by his relatively high Health.

Sloth

■ **The Risen One**
■ **150 Health**

■ The Primagen somehow reanimated the putrefied corpse of this hulking Pur-Linn, making it the most maggot-ridden of the contenders. Sloth regenerates Health at a slow but steady rate. In fact, "slow" pretty much describes this beast, he's the slowest multi-player character here. Of course, he has by far the most Health to start with, making him one of the most powerful.

Endtrail

■ **100 Health**

■ This vicious and cunning fighter's jumping capability is second only to that of the Raptor. Learning how to use this skill can make the Endtrail the contender of choice for the more nimble (and brutally heartless) of *Turok 2* players.

Fireborn

■ **80 Health**

■ Two things make this contender unique. The first is its regeneration capability; while it's not the fastest regenerator, when its Health

does start to come back, it won't stop at the Fireborn's current 80 capacity. Instead, the Fireborn can regenerate up to 110 Health, making it potentially more powerful than it was to begin with. The Fireborn is also immune to fire, making it capable of safely traversing the lava which exists in some multi-player levels.

Raptor

■ **120 Health**

■ Possibly the nastiest contender, the Raptor is one of the fastest in multi-player. It can jump the fastest and furthest. In fact, the only thing that keeps this monster short of unstoppable is that it can't pick up any weapons. That's right – it can only engage enemies in claw-to-hand combat, making it a natural target for long distance firepower. Still, practice with the Raptor's speed and agility, and you'll be able to run down an opponent before they get off a second shot.

Joshua Fireseed

■ **Civilian Identity**
■ **100 Health**

■ When Joshua Fireseed isn't

blowing away beasts in the Lost Land as Turok, he's an NCAA baseball All-Star at Oklahoma College in Oklahoma City. But don't let the jeans and T-shirt fool you – this guy is the same dinosaur hunter you know and love, and he doesn't need the bone washboard and high-tech sunglasses to prove it. Essentially, this is the same character as the Coyote Knight outlined at the beginning of this section. The good people at Iguana just wanted you to have an opportunity to throw two of him into a deathmatch.

Campaigner

■ **120 Health**

■ Until Primagen came along, this dude was the baddest of the bad. Yes, the main villain from *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* returns to duke it out with his old nemesis once more – and this match ain't gonna be resolved in a friendly game of baseball. Though not quite as omnipotent as he was at the end of the previous video-game, Campaigner is still plenty potent. In fact, his combined Health, strength and manoeuvrability make him one

of the most powerful multi-player contenders.

Tal'Set

■ **The Valiant One**
■ **110 Health**

■ When polled about who would win in a fight – the older, more experienced hero from *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* or the younger, snarkier protagonist of *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil* – many of you said that Tal'Set would whip the tar out of Joshua Fireseed. Well, here's your chance to find out. It can't be denied that Tal'Set has more muscle mass than his great-great-great grandson, but Josh does edge it over the Valiant One on overall agility. In either case, here's your chance to revisit one of the Nintendo 64's greatest heroes of all time.

Monkey

■ **Moving target**

■ Finally it can be told, the rumours are true. You can be the mysterious and ever-elusive Monkey from the original *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*. Why on earth would you want to and what's with the fanfare? Your guess is as good as ours.

WEAPON TIPPERY

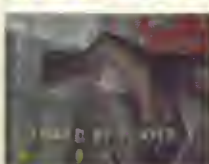
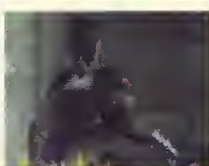
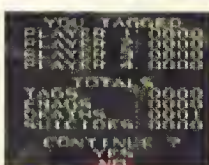
■ Because there's not much of a sniper element in the available weapons, we recommend you find and use the Scorpion launcher, especially if you don't have the best aim. We feel it's the strongest weapon in multi-player, and it has splash damage, so you don't have to be a marksman to use it. Blast 'em and move.

■ Hunt down the grenade launcher, especially if you're up against a much tougher opponent. You'll like it, it does massive damage.

■ The Firestorm cannon is number three on our treasure hunt in multi-player. It's fast and sprays easily.

■ As soon as your opponent switches to Cerebral Bore, run like hell. If there's a clear path between it and you, you're meat. Head for more complex terrain, like brush or corridors and dart back and forth as you run. You can actually make the cerebral bore "tired" and it will eventually stop chasing you.

■ Using the Scorpion launcher, you can "rocket jump". Just point at the ground, start to jump and shoot. The resulting concussive force will propel you three times higher than just simple jumping. You will take a little damage, but it's definitely worth it in a pinch, and it's guaranteed to make your opponents' jaws drop in disbelief – and blood.



■ **Come on mate we can work this one out there's a Nobel Peace Prize in this for us if we can sit down and look at the issues from a rational point of view there's really no need for guns'n'ammo is there we can make the world a better place... ahhh shite, eat this ya pussy!**

THE WEAPONS

■ Your choice of weapons in *Turok 2* multi-player mode is a bit more limited than in Quest mode. The reason for this is at least partially technological. If all the weapons were offered here – including some with elaborate optical effects – the combined animations in a four-way split screen would slow things down a bit, and that would be unacceptable. Also, weapons like the Nuke would pretty much end things for everybody right away, and we wouldn't want that either. Available in all Bloodlust and Frag Tag games are: crossbow, charge dart rifle, assault rifle, plasma rifle, Firestorm cannon, Cerebral Bore, grenade launcher, Scorpion launcher and the torpedo launcher.

The crossbow and assault rifle take the places of bow and shotgun respectively, from Quest mode.

The differences are that the crossbow gives you unlimited ammo and its power level is pegged somewhere

between the bow and tek bow; the assault rifle returns from the first *Turok* game, it's a slightly more powerful version of the shotgun.

It's tougher to snipe in multi-player. Iguana took the lock off the scorpion launcher, the crossbow does not have a sniper mode and neither does the plasma rifle. It was decided that sniper-lock capability in this mode of play would simply upset the balance.

Also, you have to remember (if you want to stay alive) that in multi-player mode, when your ammo runs out, you lose the weapon, so keep track of your supplies and hold your crossbow handy.

Finally, some of the higher-powered weapons obviously make for a quicker kill. If you want a longer, more suspenseful multi-player match, turn off the big-bang weapons and go at it with the basics – after all, how much skill does it take to kill an enemy with a cerebral bore?

CLOCKING OFF

■ **Phew. To be honest, I'm all tipped out, now. In fact, I think I'll go home. Can I? Thanks. Next month we've got... Y'know? I can't even bear to think about it just quite yet.**

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Mark

Rich

Sam

The Arcade boys enter into the spirit of another Games Night. Would you trust these guys with a real gun?

PHOTOGRAPHY: PA NEWS, STEVE BARTHOLOMEW

Fragging great

Your host | **Sam Richards**

Every couple of weeks the Arcade editorial lowlives meet up for an evening of serious drinking and fighting. This time the evening was punctuated by the best deathmatch shoot-'em-ups the videogame world has to offer.

You materialise in a dark room. It's eerie, dank and it smells. Over the swell of spookily-bowed strings, you can just make out the sound and stench of an acid pool bubbling. A disjointed primal roar becomes audible in the darkness. A film of cold sweat begins to form on your forehead. Yes, my living room on a Games Night is very similar to the first level of *Quake*. The acid pool? That's the decomposing pizza someone left behind the sofa after the last event. The primal roar? That's Mark burning his mouth on a hot onion bhaji. The spookily-bowed strings? Well, I just made that up for effect. But you get the picture.

So here we are again, ready to contest the Games Night crown, and this time there's no room for the foolish, the feckless or the faint of heart. Deathmatch shoot-outs require speed, guile, nerve and unerring accuracy – qualities difficult to maintain at the best of times, let alone after a crate of Prague's finest lager – but the Games Night panel presses on, undeterred. Literally, this will be a fight to the death.

You may be thinking that the true home of the deathmatch shoot-out is on the PC, where games such as *Doom*, *Quake* and *Unreal* defined the first-person 3D shoot-'em-up genre. These were the first to make use of network capabilities and on-line gaming in order to facilitate multi-player contests. It's true that many of the shoot-'em-ups available on the consoles are resolution-reduced versions of PC games, but the spirit generally remains intact. PCs, however, simply aren't compatible with the Games Night mindset; lending themselves to desks and coffee rather than sofas and beer. Still, enough scene-setting; time to begin filling each other with lead. Or poison darts. Or rockets. Or toilet plungers. Or that thing that makes your brain spurt out of your ears.

8.20pm

Doom, PlayStation (GT Interactive)



Having banned PC multi-player gaming from Games Night because beer and hassle curdle when mixed, it's acknowledged that setting up a two-player deathmatch in *Doom* is still no picnic. You'll need two PlayStations, two tellies, two copies of the game and a link

cable, as well as a certain degree of patience to get you through the





moment when Neil dumps the second television carelessly on top of your half-eaten rogan josh. It's worth the extra effort, though – the *Doom* experience is one of high tension, the atmosphere heightened by the levels' complex lighting and the juxtaposition of huge open arenas with narrow, claustrophobic passages.

As with any deathmatch, much relies on your knowledge of the level and your success in the race to find the best weapon (usually the rocket launcher). However, ammo is in short supply and even rockets can be dodged by a skillful opponent. A sixth sense suggesting where your opponent is likely to turn up is handy, especially in the more labyrinthine levels, although the way some of us are playing (Mark particularly keen on obliterating himself by firing a rocket in a confined space), a first sense would be a start.

Mark: "When I interviewed Thresh, he was going on about multi-player deathmatches being the new spectator sport, so we can see if he's got a point." [Mark interviewed Thresh – aka Dennis Fong, the world *Quake* champion – back in Arcade 1, and hasn't stopped dropping his name into conversation since.]

Neil: "Well it's not exactly the World Cup final, but it is kind of compelling."

Mark and Rich pick up the joypads and start things off. May the first battle of the evening commence...

Mark: "Ooh, there're dead bodies everywhere. That's not very pleasant."

Rich: "There you are! Come back and let me shoot you! You're running off like a pansy!"

Mark: "I'm not bottling it, I've just got to find a better weapon so I can come back and smack you up."

Rich: "You've got a bigger telly, Mark, so it's easier. Plus when you've got a good weapon you just stay still. Otherwise you just run off like a girl."

Neil: "Yeah, let's have some man-on-man action! Hang on. Don't quote me on..."

Too late. Eventually, the concept of a finite ammo supply proves too much for Mark and he finds himself unarmed and reduced to fighting bare-knuckle. In the spirit of fairness, Rich discards his weapon but still wins the ensuing slapping battle. The next round lasts for a tense ten minutes before the players finally meet, Mark letting out a surprised whimper as Rich unexpectedly appears behind him while he is complacently loitering in the spot where he found the rocket launcher.

Rich: "I'm not playing against this simpering wuss any more. He's a *Doom* goalthanger and when anyone appears he starts whimpering like a baby."

Mark: "Just wait until *GoldenEye*, Pelley."

Following this little display of bravado, Neil justifies his billing as pre-match favourite by fragging all-comers, although a cheating scandal threatens to spoil the contest. My living room doesn't have enough space to

position the TVs back-to-back, so Neil and Rich are attempting to steal hurried glances at each other's on-screen location.

Rich: "I was just peeking over because Neil had his hair cut today and I wanted to see what it looked like close up."

Neil: "Pelley, you're a cheating bastard."

Rich: "But you're trying to kill me!"

This being the point of the game, Neil does indeed kill Rich and proceeds to wallop me 5-0, racking up an unhealthy "glance count" in the process.

Neil: "I'm crap at all the other games we're playing tonight, so can I be the King of *Doom* please?"

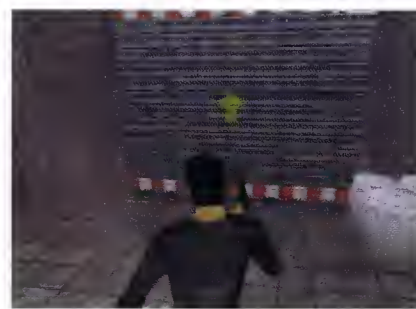
Sam: "Yes Neil, you can be the King of *Doom*. Now go and get us all another beer."

9.47pm

GoldenEye 007, N64 (Nintendo)



There's somebody at the door. It turns out to be Robin, Arcade's Reviews Ed, who earlier the same day totally, absolutely and



■ You may think you're "it" with a pistol in your hand, but any moment now someone's going to tear your head off with a rocket.

■ Ah, Mr Bond, I've been expecting you. And now I'm going to pin you against the wall with a rapid volley of gunfire from my RCP-90. Live and let die, as they say.

definitively insisted he didn't want to be involved with this evening's Games Night because he is "too busy doing loads of far more important stuff". "I've come to borrow a cup of sugar," he murmurs sheepishly, although evidently he just wants to drink beer he hasn't paid for and play *GoldenEye*.

Frankly, we can't blame him. *GoldenEye* is one of the few games to have a multi-player mode so carefully tailored that it's as sharp and stylish as the single player game. Even with the screen split into four, there's none of the blurry edges that blight *Quake* and even *Turok 2*, and there are so many options when it comes to levels and weapon types (anything from throwing knives to rocket launchers), that it's difficult to know which to choose first.

Mark urges us to select the Licence To Kill mode in which one shot kills, but although this would undoubtedly heighten the tension of the evening, it would also mean that Mark – who knows every level with greater familiarity than he knows his own parents – would win every time. However, it proves that even the opportunity to spray bullets from an RCP-90 isn't much help when Mark (playing Bond, naturally) manoeuvres himself into a position where he can kill everyone without them seeing him. The stench of death fills the air, and the only man left alive is Rich, who has been stuck in a room for five minutes because he hasn't worked out which button opens the door.

Robin: "I love this game, it's great. But I'm going to go home again if Mark keeps winning."

Mark: "See, I told you when it came to *GoldenEye* I'd make you all cry."

Mark then proceeds to shoot Robin's Natalya character while he's paused the game for a toilet break.

Neil: "That's not the chivalrous Bond we know. What is this, Licence To Be An Utter Bastard?"

Mark: "Tell you what, I'll give myself a handicap so you can all have a chance."

Rich: "If you don't stop being a cocky shite, I'll give you a real handicap."

We all take our petty revenge on Mark and conclude that *GoldenEye* really is master of the deathmatch genre. It looks fantastic and the gun battles are furious – even if the inclusion of a radar precludes the kind of pant-wetting tension provided by *Doom*.

GoldenEye really is master of the deathmatch genre. It looks fantastic and the gun battles are furious

10.42pm
Turok 2, N64 (Acclaim)



The original *Turok* game was much-loved, but there was much bemoaning its lack of a multi-player option. While it was a

The joypad jury

Four men armed to the teeth and gasping for a frag.

■ The Arcade office was quiet. Too quiet. For weeks now, the tension had been building. Four men, one grudge. But who would leave the room alive?



Mark
He's the man with the plan and a mouthful of obscenities. So psyched that even in these times of peace, he's still going "commando". Calm down ladies...



Rich
Arcade's muscle-bound monument to testosterone. He's got a licence to thrill, if he could only work out how to open an unlocked door.



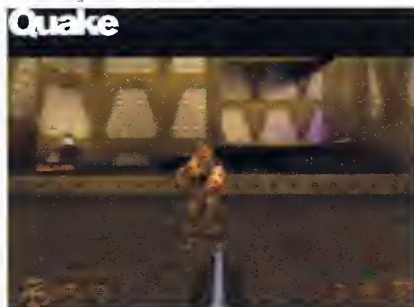
Neil
He's the *Doom*-monger and the dungeon keeper. He can sniff out your exact location using his sixth sense (or by cheating – he's happy either way).



Sam
Creeping through the shadows like a stealth assassin, it's Arcade's very own man of mystery. Or is he just a complete coward? You decide.



■ *Turok 2's* deathmatch enables you to amass the kind of arsenal which would send UN weapons inspectors into paroxysms.



■ N64's *Quake* may not be as grand as the PC version, but we still chewed on its broomstick many times. Thresh didn't like it, but then his real name is Dennis. The big pansy.

blast to train those deeply unsavoury weapons on the mewling mutant dinosaurs, what we really wanted was to tear the heads off our mates and use them as footballs. Developer Iguana listened to the pleas of the people and lo, *Turok 2* is an answer to these prayers.

The game is certainly less of an immediate pile-in than the other deathmatches we're playing tonight. The weapons are distinctly odd and it takes a while to get accustomed to their idiosyncratic effects. Like the one which fires a blue electric ray, forcing the recipient to dance around like a hyperactive bodypopper.

Rich: "The method for changing your weapon is strange. This game is confusing."

Mark: "Where's the map? I just want it to be like *GoldenEye*."

Rich: "I keep ending up with the crossbow. Bollocks."

Neil: "Look, look, I'm making him dance!" (breaks into chorus of the Bee Gees' *You Should Be Dancin'*)

Mark: "How do I stop the dance?"

Eventually, Mark finds the cerebral bore and forces Rich's character's brain out of his head, a move greeted with much applause. In desperation, Rich accuses Mark of cheating by looking at his corner of the screen, until we point out that this is unavoidable. In truth, *Turok 2's* deathmatch is a little chaotic because the levels are small and the weapons powerful and plentiful.

Neil: "I didn't like it – maybe because I didn't have time to get into it. It's not like *GoldenEye*, which is pick-up-and-play."

Mark: "It's a greedy game. You have to go round amassing an arsenal so that the other players can't get the weapons."

Rich: "I think *Doom* is all about speed and who can get to the best weapon first. *GoldenEye* is more strategic because you can use the map and hide in corners. *Turok 2* is tense and you have to understand the weapons. I didn't enjoy it at first, but it's definitely a grower."

11.20pm

Quake, N64 (GT Interactive)



Rich: "Before we go any further, can I ask how they came up with the word 'frag'?"

Neil: "It's a military word. They use it in the US Marine Corps. You see, I coulda beena Lieutenant."

So we still don't really know what "frag" means, but with the vague idea that it's some kind of military jargon, we can start *Quake*-ing. The game was created by id software, who also produced the earlier *Doom*, and to all intents and purposes the two are rather similar. *Quake* is the game that revolutionised multi-player gaming on the PC, but its console equivalent is viewed as a poor relation. In fact, the world's most famous *Quake*-head was particularly disparaging about the transformation...

Mark: "When I told Thresh I'd played N64 *Quake*, he laughed like a drain."

Rich: "It's Thresh this and Thresh that with you, isn't it? When's the wedding?"

Like trying to play *GoldenEye* confined to one arena while wearing thick-lens specs and leaping about on a pogo stick

Neil and Rich's two-player battle (there's no four-player option here) collapses into giggles when they think too hard about Thresh's real name – Dennis Fong.

Neil: "He was a normal boy called Dennis, who lived an everyday life – until he sat down at a PC and became Thresh! It's just like Bananaman."

Mark [desperately trying to change the subject]: "I think *Quake's* multi-player levels are really well designed. There are loads of passages and there's a good spread of weapons and armour."

Neil: "Thing is, knowledge is power in this game. If you know the levels well you're always going to win."

A comment tasting suspiciously of sour grapes as Neil hasn't won a single game against any of us.

But while *Quake* is undeniably entertaining, it's a little rough around the edges and doesn't quite scale the same levels of tension and excitement as the other games we've played so far. Our abiding memory is of the amusing tenor of the on-screen captions, particularly "Player 1 chewed on player 2's broomstick" and, following an unintentional dalliance with molten lava, "You turned into hot slag." These seem to



■ One of these games is not like the others. *South Park* eschews big guns in favour of comedy – and fails dismally.

trigger a lever in Mark's brain, turning him into a foul-mouthed misogynist, celebrating the lack of girls involved in this month's Games Night and deciding that *Arcade* ought to cover more "man's stuff" from now on.

Rich: "Better not let Mark have another Hooch, or he'll go wild."

12.08am

South Park, N64 (Acclaim)



At last, a game whose characters accurately reflect the level of obscenity uttered by the Games Night panel. As Kyle, Stan, Cartman and Kenny waddle aimlessly around their smalltown backwater environment, pelting each other with yellow snowballs, toilet plungers and Terrance & Phillip dolls, they fill the air with words of the type usually strongly disapproved of by your mother. This is really funny for about five minutes, but soon becomes tiresome when its full awfulness really hits home.

Rich: "This is actually terrible. I can't see where I am and I don't know where I'm going. The whole screen is a vague blur."

Neil: "The weapons are funny but the game is so random, it soon becomes tedious. It would be good if you could press a button to activate the swearing."

These are sure signs of a game built around novelty amusement value instead of good gameplay and for a few minutes we're happy as pigs in a mudbath. We've no idea

quite what's going on, but we're amused by the Alien Dancing Gizmo which, when fired, forces your opponent to apply makeup and waltz around in a '40s-style. As soon as we attempt to apply our deathmatch skills to the game in order to win, we're lost. It's like trying to play *GoldenEye* confined to one arena while wearing thick-lens specs and leaping about on a pogo stick.

As for deciding the winner, we would have saved a lot of frustration if we'd drawn lots beforehand. The fact that each character becomes invincible for a few seconds after being hit means that you have to completely pummel an opponent in order to score a kill. Eventually, Rich finds the cow-launcher and catapults an unsuspecting Friesian at the rest of us during a point-blank three-way snowball fight in the corner. We can only thank him for putting us out of our misery.

Mark: "To quote Ned Gerblansky, I'd rather shove shards of glass up my behind and sit in Tabasco sauce than play that game again."

Rich: "*South Park*, you've stolen 30 good minutes of my life, and I want them back."

A plaintive and hopeless cry. Suffice to say we didn't like this game very much. Half an hour ago we were pumped to the point where real fights were breaking out as a result of our console battles. Now the *South Park* experience has left us tired, emotional and reaching for the hard liquor.

Mark: "Why is that I'm totally exhausted, my eyes hurt and I never want to play another game again?"

Ah, and that's the way we all feel after another strenuous Games Night which has



once more tested our skills, endurance and patience. In the deathmatch war, there are no winners, only battle-scarred losers with weary minds and bruised trigger fingers. Frankly, we're all fragged.



Games Night picks

So we've eaten enough lead to poison a small nation. But what have we learned?

- 1) Graphics do count. You need to be able to see your surroundings in as much detail as possible in order to play the most exciting games of cat-and-mouse. It's no fun when players emerge out of the fog right in front of each other. *Doom* and *GoldenEye 007* were by far the best games for this.
- 2) Comedy weapons à la *South Park* are great for a bit, but they do need to have noticeably different effects in order to maintain interest. No-one's going to confuse *Turok 2*'s missile launcher with the marvellous cerebral bore, for example.
- 3) The range and power of weapons are also important.

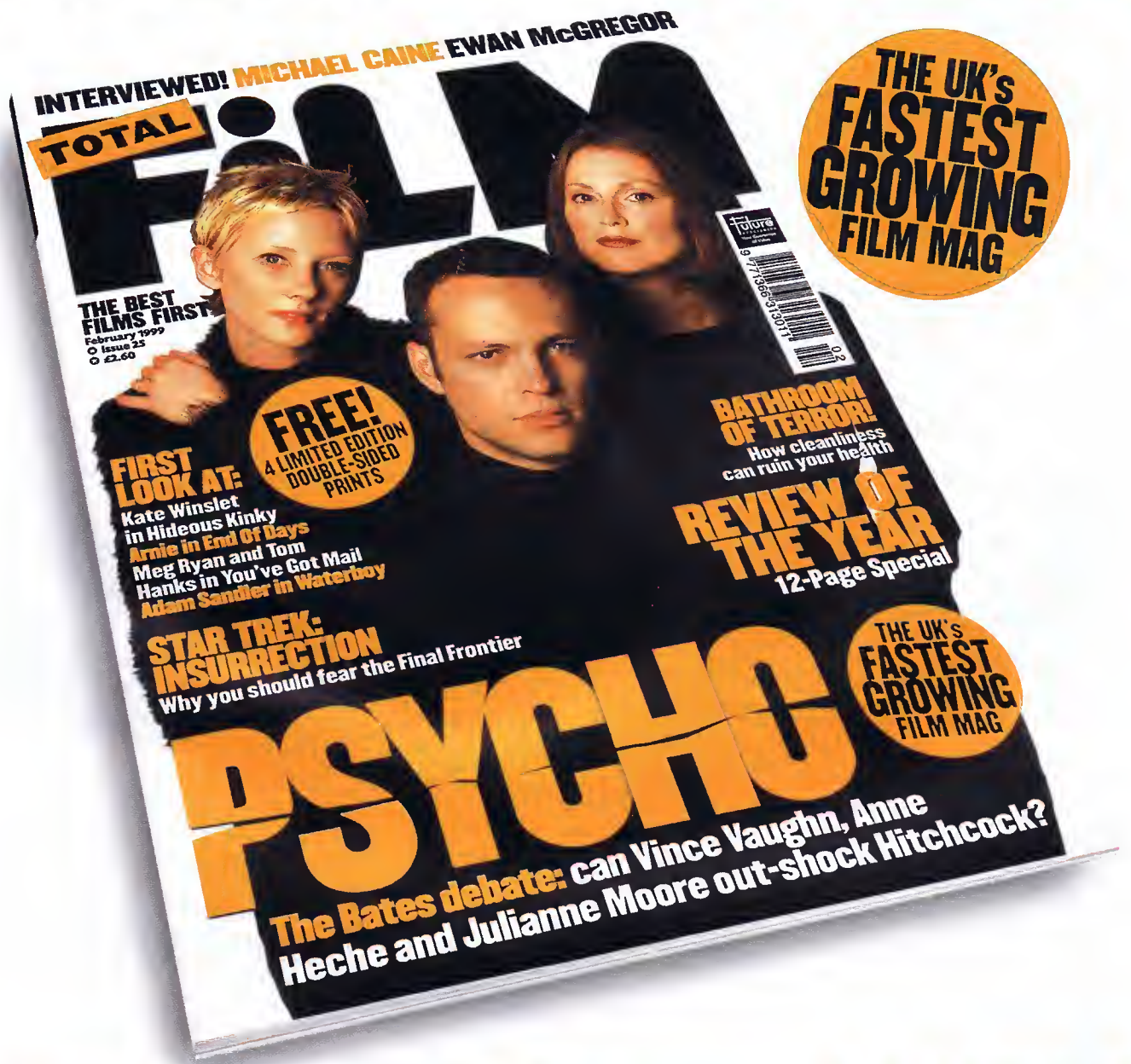
GoldenEye is the most versatile of the games we played, and the weapon options it offers make for longer battle lengths, if that's what you want. *Turok 2*'s abundance of huge weapons makes for short explosive deathmatches, while in *Doom* and *Quake* there are generally one or two rocket launchers per level which it's advantageous to pick up before your opponent gets them. 4) However good your general deathmatch skills, you're always likely to fall foul of a player who knows the levels inside out. This is true of *Doom*'s intricate mazes, while *GoldenEye*'s radar map makes for a more democratic battle.



The Winner

GoldenEye 007
There's no doubt that this N64/Rare offering is the best deathmatch shoot-'em-up available for console. The number of levels, characters, weapons and battle modes are enough to keep you going for months, while the darity of the scenery is astonishing – even when the screen is split four ways. This makes for truly skillful deathmatches, rather than the random blast-outs that the other games are occasionally reduced to.

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February 1999



A Review

The Ultimate Game Buyer's Guide

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MORE THAN
50
GAMES
REVIEWED!

R4: RIDGE RACER TYPE 4

PEDAL-TO-THE-METAL PLAYSTATION RACING THRILLS AS NAMCO'S LATEST LEAVES GRAN TURISMO COUGHING EXHAUST FUMES. ALL THIS PLUS TIGER WOODS, HAN SOLO AND GODZILLA. IT'S A MONSTER.

PLUS! FILMS/MUSIC/GADGETS/COMICS/INTERNET/CD-ROMS/
TOYS/BOARD GAMES/GAME ACCESSORIES/VIDEOS/BOOKS

Star ratings

★★★★★ Simply the best. A game you really must play.
★★★★ Excellent. Definitely worth your money.
★★★ Good stuff. Not a world-beater, but fine within its genre.
★★ Strictly average. We say: don't buy it.
★ Awful. Avoid at all costs.

New PlayStation Games

Arcade
PlayStation
Game of
the Month





R4: Ridge Racer Type 4

■ Publisher: **Namco** ■ Developer: **Namco**
■ Price: **around £59.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now**
(Japan), March (UK) ■ Players: 1-2

Namco's Ridge Racer was one of the first PlayStation games. Now it's back, and faster than ever before.

Let's make one thing clear from the start. *R4* is fast. Take any definition you currently have of the word "fast", multiply it by five and you'll have the merest inkling of just how quick *R4* is. Watching the scenery fly past at 150kph on a straight is bad enough, but it doesn't prepare you for the queasiness that comes with careering down a hill at nearly twice that speed. It's like riding a rocket. The first time you play, winning becomes a secondary concern – simply finishing without your bonnet becoming intimate with a wall is tough enough.

But this is almost to be expected – if there's one thing that Namco always promised *R4* would have, it's speed. What's incredible is that it's been delivered without sacrificing any of the other aspects that go to make up a great racing game. Okay, it's a through-and-through arcade racer: the emphasis here is very much on foot-to-the-floor ➔

[IMPORTANT]

FOOT TO THE 4

MOVE OVER GRAN TURISMO. THERE'S A NEW CHAMPION IN TOWN



■ The Pac Racing Club car provides a nice historical link between Namco old and new.

pyrotechnics as opposed to an ultra-realistic simulation. But as arcade racers go, this is the complete package.

So let's take a look at what *R4* delivers. First, the graphics. If you really want to appreciate just how far the series has come, turn your attention to the bonus disc which contains the original *Ridge Racer* in an updated 60-frames-per-second form. Watching the hilarious 2D aeroplanes and cardboard box buildings float by is the *Ridge Racer* equivalent of a slap in the face; waking you up to just how much *R4*'s visuals improve on its prequels. Namco has made 1995's

on, it's easy to get carried away with *R4*'s looks and convince yourself that they're the reason why you're enjoying the game so much.

But no matter how breath-taking the graphics, they've only a supporting role to *Ridge Racer*'s main attraction – its racing thrills. The course of its history, from the original *Ridge Racer* in the arcades to *Rage Racer* on the PlayStation, has been concerned with speed – rocketing down straights, powersliding through corners and overtaking one car at a time to get a taste of the victory champagne. These games have turned their noses up at gear ratios, tyre changes and the foot-on-the-brake school of corner-taking, concentrating instead on getting from start to finish as quickly, and with as little hassle, as possible.

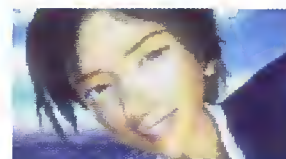
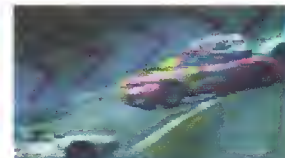
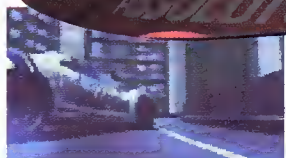
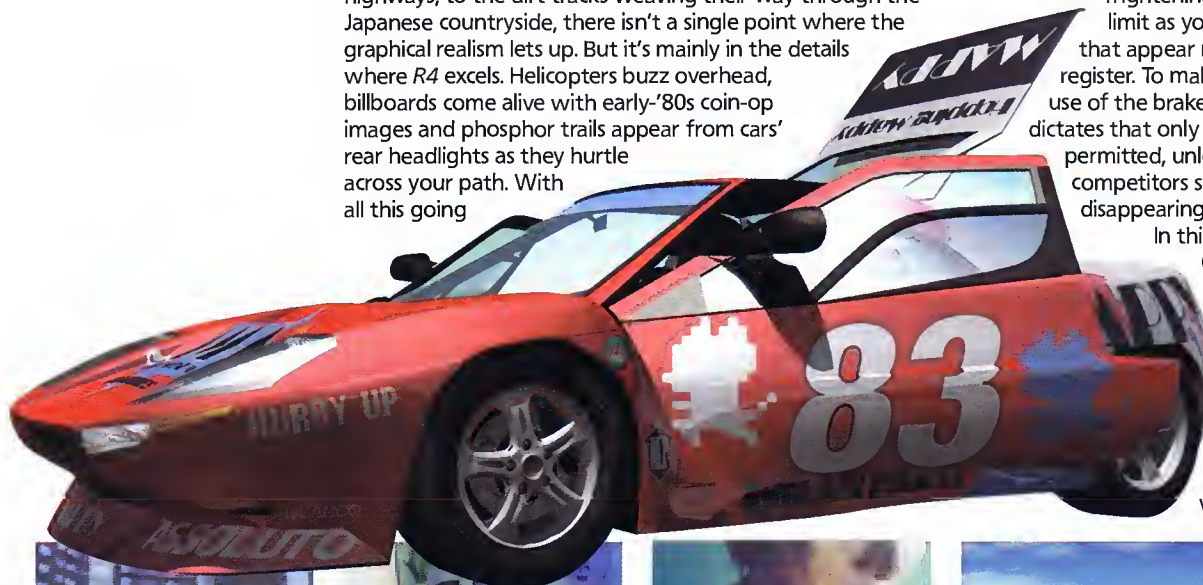
Thankfully, *R4* is no exception, and Namco has pushed the PlayStation to its absolute limits to ensure that it's the most exhilarating installment of the lot. The speed and smoothness with which the track flies under your wheels is frightening, stretching your reactions to the limit as you try to slide in and out of corners that appear more quickly than your brain can register. To make things even more testing, the use of the brake is practically outlawed – *R4* dictates that only easing off the accelerator slightly is permitted, unless you enjoy watching your competitors sticking up two fingers and disappearing into the distance.

In this way, with each of the eight Grand Prix tracks giving you only four attempts to secure a high enough finishing position, every race becomes a heart-pounding battle against relegation. Your eyes will be darting maniacally as you come out of a straight at 300kph and attempt to powerslide around the corner, without giving the car behind the

THE SPEED AND SMOOTHNESS WITH WHICH THE TRACK FLIES UNDER YOUR WHEELS IS FRIGHTENING

state-of-the-art look like the friendless and neglected coin-op tucked away in the corner of the chippie.

No course has dodged the magic polygon paintbrush. From the skyscrapers towering ominously over the city highways, to the dirt tracks weaving their way through the Japanese countryside, there isn't a single point where the graphical realism lets up. But it's mainly in the details where *R4* excels. Helicopters buzz overhead, billboards come alive with early-'80s coin-op images and phosphor trails appear from cars' rear headlights as they hurtle across your path. With all this going



■ Another incredible Namco intro. Ridge girl and Arcade cover star Reiko Nagase thumbs a lift from the shiniest car in the world to get to her job as race starter.



calling for our mums.

Even if you inexplicably manage to power your way through the Expert mode in a day or two, *R4* is choc-a-block with extra modes and rewards to keep you in the driver's seat for weeks. On top of the usual time trials and extra challenges, there's the incentive of earning extra cars, which you can use in subsequent races. The vehicles themselves are a brilliant bunch, ranging from traditional rally-style cars to outlandish futuristic rocket-ships, and you can customise the bodywork in the novel paint-shop section. And then, after you've explored all of this, there's the excellent two-player mode – probably where you'll get most value out of the game.

Ultimately, though, it's Namco's fine-tuning that makes *R4* such an addictive experience. It may not offer the gorgeous video replays or comprehensiveness of *Gran Turismo*, but every aspect of the game *feels* right, resulting in a racer where the only barrier to better performances is your own ability. This is the way it should be. And even though hurtling around one circuit of *R4* will shatter your nerves and leave your reflexes in a state of permanent spasm, you'll find yourself always stabbing at the Start button for just one more go. ★★★★★ **Mark Green**

YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF ALWAYS STABBING AT THE START BUTTON FOR JUST ONE MORE GO

opportunity to shunt you into the wall. It's unbelievably tense, but the perfectly-tuned controls make the process as painless as possible, and the moments where you do manage to storm past some poor sap on the final approach and secure first place make it all worthwhile.

Don't feel guilty about such tactics – not only do the computer cars always come off best in collisions, they hate your guts, too. If they're not trying to subtly nudge you off the track, they'll be driving so blindingly fast that making one mistake will mean you going home with the wooden spoon. Namco has even used that cruelest of programmer's tricks; the false sense of security. We polished off the "normal" difficulty setting in less than an hour, but by the time the fifth race on the "hard" setting had arrived, we were

↑ Uppers & Downers

Pace car

- Graphics to make your TV blush
- Faster than you could ever imagine
- Tons of cars to get your mitts on

Pace maker

- The computer cars will annoy you with their brilliance
- Surprisingly easy to begin with
- Not out in the UK until March

Or you could try...

Gran Turismo

SCE ★★★★★

For those who want a little more depth, it's still the best racer in the world.

Rage Racer

Namco ★★★★★

A little long in the tooth now, but still a fine racer. Worth picking up cheap if you can...

What's an import?

IMPORT

■ Although you'll find plenty of specialist games shops willing to sell you a copy of *Ridge Racer 4*, the game's not officially released in the UK until March. The version we've reviewed here and the version you'll find on sale is imported from Japan. You won't be able to play it on your UK PlayStation unless you've had your machine "chipped" – a process that alters its innards so it will play foreign games. This costs around £20 (just ask at any games shop), or you can wait for March. The decision, as they say, is yours.



■ From the track select screen to the glare of the car's tail lights, *R4* is a classy, polished-beyond-belief drive. You have to look really hard to notice the tiny fall in detail in the split-screen two-player mode. Although we'd like to road test it more, we'd put it ahead of two-player *Gran Turismo* for foot-to-the-floor, head-to-head battles.



HARD AS NAILS

RECKON YOU'RE MEAN ENOUGH TO TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE?



Kensei

■ Publisher: **Konami** ■ Developer: **Konami**
■ Price: **£44.99** ■ Release date: **January** ■ Players: **1-2**
■ Extras: **Memory card**

Konami, creator of the majestic *Metal Gear Solid*, focuses its expertise on the brutal world of beat-'em-ups. The resulting game is one of the PlayStation's best kept secrets...

Tyson or Ali? It's a simple question. But when it comes to deciding whether brute force or skill is what makes a fighting game great, beat-'em-up fans quickly develop a split personality. The truth is that they want both. Fighting games have to be vicious and filthy enough to make us want to scrap in the first place, but they can't be coarse little cheaters if they're to keep our interest in the long term. So far, only *Tekken* has appealed

■ Good old dragon punches are still in there so you can produce an uppercut like this. It may not look spectacular, but it hurts.



to both sides of our nature on PlayStation, but now *Kensei* hopes to join this exclusive club.

Kensei is the strong, silent type. It's got a spectacular range of counters, throws and grabs up its sleeve but, unlike *Tekken*, it doesn't boast about them. Throw a few punches and pull off a few kicks and you might not be that impressed. Graphically, it can't match even *Tekken Mark 1* for flash effects, although the speed and crunching impact of most moves is hard to fault. Believe us, though, you're barely scratching the surface. Dodge to one side of an opponent as they wade in and suddenly all manner of grapples, side-stepping attacks and throws become possible. A quick look at the training mode will convince anyone of *Kensei*'s prowess as characters spin each other round, snap necks, pummel kidneys and generally assault each other with wild abandon.

One-player mode is a minor revelation. For those who have completed *Tekken 3* in a day, getting a drubbing from one of *Kensei*'s sub-bosses is a chastening experience. You'll find that the boss characters actually learn your tactics and counter appropriately so that one combo, or even a few choice sets of moves, won't get your character to the finish. Even completing the game with

a couple of characters is no excuse for turning into a smug git. Changing from the lithe Yuli to Steven Seagal-clone Douglas is like swapping your Porsche 911 for a monster truck.

Tactics and tricks that you've learnt with one fighter don't apply across the board, so it's back to the school of hard knocks, until you find new ways to win.

All this wouldn't matter a damn if, like so many other *Tekken* wannabes, *Kensei*'s appeal faded after a couple of day's play. That it doesn't is down to a lot of hard graft on the part of the game's creators – *Kensei* has been tweaked and tweaked until it's got a better sense of balance than the fittest of ballerinas. If trying to expand the cast list from eight to 20 fighters in Normal mode will keep you busy for a week or so, then the Survival and Time Attack modes are the ultimate one-player challenge. Of course, you can get other people involved in your high-score attempts but, like all the best videogames, setting yourself new targets is what these modes are all about.

Kensei is almost too efficient, too svelte and well engineered for its own good. Compared to *Tekken 3* or even *Dead or Alive* it lacks the same showmanship and pizzazz. At times it's dour, even humourless, too concerned with the serious art of fighting to crack a visual joke. Yet, after the ridiculous mega-moves of a zillion scantily-clad, fantasy fighters, being brought down to Earth with a bump by a game as addictive and deep as *Kensei* has to be a good thing. ★★★★★

Pete Wilton

IT'S GOT A BETTER SENSE OF BALANCE THAN THE FITTEST OF BALLERINAS

Or you could try...

Tekken 3
Namco ★★★★★
Graphics to kill for and lots of depth make this the best of the best.

Tekken 2
Namco ★★★★★
The finest fighter for those on a budget. £20? This'll do nicely.

↑ Uppers & Downers

Stings like a bee
■ Brilliant blocking and counters
■ Real 3D moves
■ Superbly challenging

Crushed like an ant
■ Looks workmanlike
■ No sense of humour
■ No lovely renders

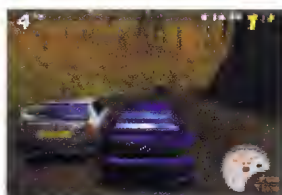


■ *Kensei* won't win any marks for flash graphics or fancy intros, but it's fluid, well animated and very fast. The differences between the slow fighters (such as Douglas) and the quick ones (such as Saya) are very noticeable. You'll have to adopt different tactics if you're to win with both.



■ *Max Power's* tracks look stunning, but they go on and on and on. And you're driving a Nissan Micra.

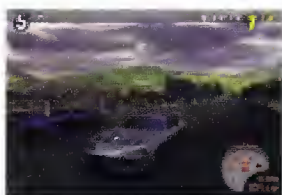
SUPER FURRY DICE CAN THIS BOY RACER GO ALL THE WAY?



Max Power Racing

■ Publisher: **Infogrames** ■ Developer: **Eutechnyx**
■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**
■ Extras: **Analogue controller, Dual Shock-compatible, memory card**

The maker of *Total Drivin'* played *Gran Turismo*, took a deep breath, and tried to better it. Tried...



■ Eventually you do get the chance to race some very fine motors, but initially you're stuck with granny's runabout.

This game, you understand, was until recently called *C3 Racing*. At the eleventh hour of development, *Max Power Racing Magazine* (the Day-Glo and tacky boy racer's mag) was roped in as a "big name" to stick on the box (it being marginally more eye-catching than "C3"). As it turns out, this was quite a suitable marriage. Which isn't to suggest that the resultant offspring, *Max Power Racing*, is a Day-Glo and tacky racer, but rather that – like the magazine – it may well only appeal to the racing mad.

Max Power Racing's problem is simple: when compared to the best racing games PlayStation has to offer it just doesn't match up. It's clear that Eutechnyx has taken a good look at *Gran Turismo* – you've got your night stages, car tuning and replays – but as soon as the race begins it quickly becomes clear that it doesn't play like *GT*. At all.

But if *GT* is the F1 of PlayStation, then *Max Power Racing* is at least the support race. Arguably, the headlight effects

in the night stages are the best you'll see on the PlayStation. The cars, from souped-up Renault Clios to speedy Toyota Supras, look stunning. The scenery is

okay (albeit quite angular and strangely reminiscent of *Tomb Raider*).

But it shoots itself in the foot in a couple of crucial areas. First, it's little too realistic. Clip any corner, tree or indeed car, and you are penalised far too heavily. The ultimate sin – missing a corner and careering down a sheer cliff-side – means early death in the Championship mode and signals the end of the race. One strike and you're very much out. This just isn't any fun.

Second, most of the tracks are beautifully designed, but are ridiculously long and occasionally difficult to follow – there's no such thing as "a quick blast" on *Max Power*. And sadly, the 30-tracks selling point is a bit of a whopper; most are simply longer or reversed versions of the originals.

Of course, the true test of the racing game is the split-screen two-player mode. *Max Power Racing* copes extremely well, albeit with just two cars ever appearing on the wide tracks. Perhaps more frustratingly, initially you can only race with a Clio or Micra. There are other cars to unlock later, but if you are without either a memory card or time, you'll do battle in the car your grandma uses to drive to Sainsbury's. There's nothing wrong with longevity in a game, but this is ridiculous.

Like the tennis at Wimbledon in World Cup year, *Max Power* is doomed to be eclipsed by *Ridge Racer4* et al. But just as Tim Henman will be remembered for his ultimately futile semi-final battle against Sampras, so *Max Power* deserves a mention for at least having a damn good go. ★★★

Ben East

↑ Uppers & Downers

- Max**
- Familiar, realistic looking cars
 - Beautifully designed tracks
- Lax**
- Not in the same league as *GT* or *R4*
 - Sluggish and glitchy at times
 - Too difficult

Or you could try...

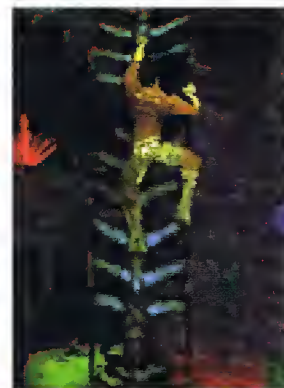
R4: Ridge Racer Type Four
Namco ★★★★★
On sale officially in the UK in March, but also worth chipping your PlayStation for.

Gran Turismo
Sony ★★★★★
Go on, dust it down just one more time. You know you want to.

YOU'LL DO BATTLE IN THE CAR YOUR GRANOMA USES TO DRIVE TO SAINSBURY'S

VOODOO CHILE

A COOL HERO, BUT HIS HEART JUST ISN'T IN IT...



■ Actor Richard Roundtree is the main voiceover artist for *Akuji*. Don't recognise the name? He played Shaft in the eponymous movie. On the theme of movies, developer Crystal Dynamics claims that the film *Angel Heart* was one of the major influences on the feel and mood of the game.

Akuji the Heartless

■ Publisher: **EIDOS Interactive** ■ Developer: **Crystal Dynamics** ■ Price: **£44.99**
 ■ Release date: **19 February** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ Extras: **Analogue controller, Dual Shock-compatible, memory card**

Akuji's not a bad bloke, he's just known as "the heartless" because his evil brother tore his heart out, y'see? Gentlemen, welcome to Crystal Dynamics' charming world of voodoo.

Got a good game engine? Then put it to good use. That must be Crystal Dynamics' motto of the year as the company has managed to shoehorn both *Akuji the Heartless* and *Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver* into the much-lauded 3D engine that originally produced *Gex: Enter the Gecko*. In the process, Crystal has added yet another title to the growing pile of *Mario*-esque free-roaming 3D adventures for the PlayStation. Don't be fooled, though – you're going to find absolutely nothing cute about this voodoo-inspired puzzler.

The tale begins with Akuji's murder at the hands of his evil brother and concerns his quest through the

underworld to recover his lost ancestors and earn the right to live again. This original tale has given the Crystal free rein to be inventive with its level design, an opportunity that

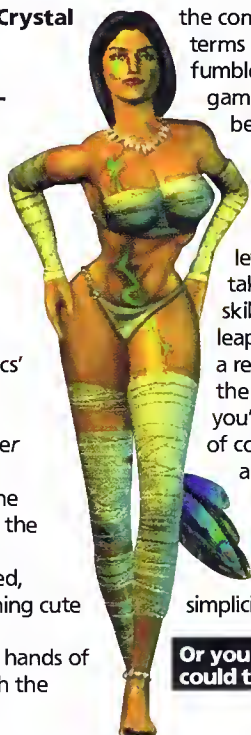
the company has grasped in terms of look and feel, but fumbled rather as far as gameplay: whatever the beautiful-looking icing on the outside, this cake's got 100%

"platform game" as its rather stodgy filling.

Akuji's puzzles are all firmly of the get key/pull lever variety and involve no more brain power than it takes to thoroughly explore your 3D environment. The skill required to play this game is the ability to judge a leap well enough to get from one platform to another, a relatively simple task that is made difficult at times by the free-roaming camera, which can suddenly shift as you're preparing for a jump. You can control the camera of course, but this often leads to tedious pauses in the action while you line yourself up.

Akuji is enjoyable, it's just that it's probably not as satisfying to play as its complex themes demand; the more mature gamer, likely to be attracted by the plot, may well be repelled by the relative simplicity of the game itself. ★★★

Steve Faragher



Or you could try...

Tomb Raider III
 EIDOS Interactive ★★★
 Lara's latest and arguably greatest outing isn't as fast-paced, but it's more thoughtful.

Spyro the Dragon
 SCEE ★★★★★
 Shows how fluid and seamless a game of this genre can be. And Spyro's 1,000-times cuter.

DON'T BE FOOLED – YOU'RE GOING TO FIND NOTHING CUTE ABOUT THIS VOODOO-INSPIRED PUZZLER

↑ Uppers & Downers

Voodoo doll

■ It's a twisted, world of ritual magic in there
 ■ *Akuji's* a versatile chap, with loads of manoeuvres
 ■ He can cast great spells, with lots of explosions

Barbie doll

■ The puzzles are too simple
 ■ The annoying camera makes the tough jumps too difficult
 ■ There's too much instant death from falling off the sides of the game



Monkey Hero

■ Publisher: **Take 2** ■ Developer: **Blam!** ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1** ■ Extras: **memory card**

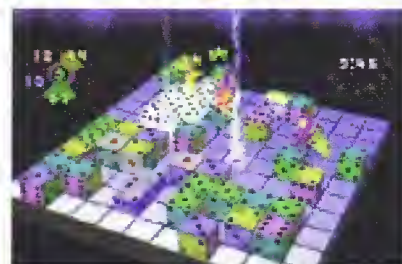
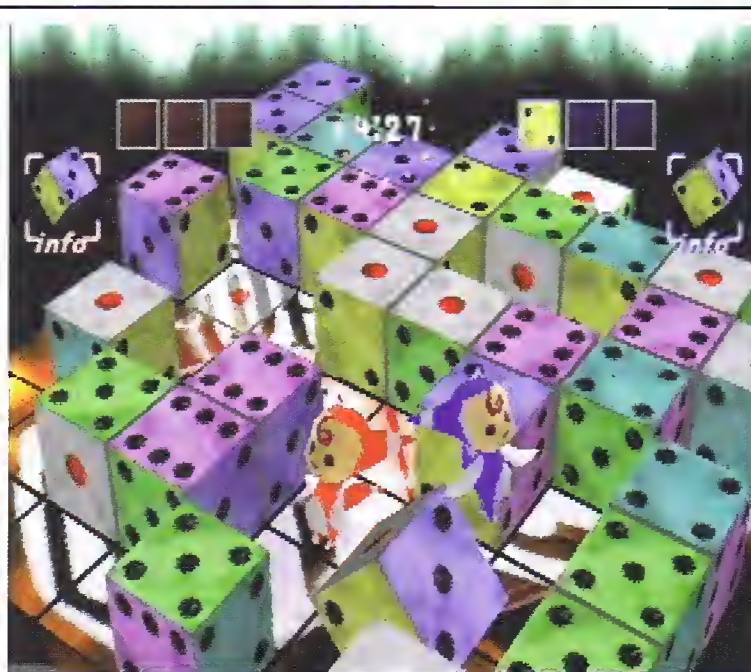
Monkey Hero scours 2,500 screens in search of the Nightmare forces...

■ Anyone over the age of 20 remembers the TV show *Monkey*. Based on traditional Japanese folklore, it was an episodic medley of fight scenes, bizarre imagery and oddball characters. Every week, Sandy, Piggy and the titular hero ruled BBC2 with gravity-defying kicks. Recent repeats on Bravo indicate the series is best left as a fond memory, but it's proved memorable enough for publisher Take 2 to commission a game adhering to its mystical origins and weird content.

Monkey Hero blends role-playing elements with fighting and puzzle sequences in a massive quest. Nightmare forces have entered the real world and are attempting to seize control; needless to say only *Monkey Hero* can save the day. During the game you are attacked by huge snails and creatures made of soup. You also experience odd mushroom-based hallucinogenic rebirths. Mysticism aside, fights are also well covered, with bamboo staff spinning and the odd bit of crate throwing adding much-needed action to the quest. So what you have is very disparate content and because of this nothing in *Monkey Hero* ever really gels.

The main problem lies with the game's linearity. Each puzzle dovetails too neatly into the next, obviously negating the need for you to explore the massive play area. The second problem is its pace. The slow movement of the enemy characters coupled with the overly simplistic fighting sequences, creates a game where the fights are apathetic. And while the 2,500 screens and plentiful end-of-stage guardians should work to create an engrossing epic, the end result is a trek through cute-but-uninspiring levels, where throwing a switch or moving an object are the extent of the puzzles' diversity.

If *Monkey Hero* is designed for younger players, it is stuck between a rock and a hard place. *Monkey* the TV series is only recalled by twentysomethings who will find little to enjoy in this routine romp. Today's younger PlayStation users are cutting their teeth on more taxing efforts – dating *Monkey Hero* even more than the original show that spawned it. ★★ **Steve Merrett**



■ God save us all. They might have Lisa Stansfield's hair, but there's nothing sweet about these little imps. They will absorb precious hours of your life and you will find yourself dreaming about their hats.

THE DICE IS RIGHT

PUZZLING ADDICTION FROM THE LOWER CIRCLES OF HELL

Uppers & Downers

Double six

- Beautifully presented
- Multi-player modes
- Makes your head hurt

Snake eyes

- Not easy to get into
- Makes your head hurt

Devil Dice

■ Publisher: **Sony** ■ Developer: **Shift**
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-5 (with multi-tap)**

In the annals of puzzle game greatness there is *Tetris*, there is *Bust-A-Move* and there is... a game of dice-rolling imps?

Be warned, mortals. *Devil Dice* is evil. Even if you think you're strong enough of spirit to have survived such tortuous personal puzzle-hells as *Bust-A-Move*'s helium-addled party, *Kula World*'s mind-bending Scandinavian conundrums and, of course, *Tetris*'s stream of blocks falling for all eternity, this game's mind-mashing dice manipulation is still almost too much to take.

On a gravity-defying board suspended in space, mischievous, hat-wearing imps roll dice around like balancing acts from a particularly surreal circus. By moving your little devil, you can flip the dice through its six sides with the objective being to make the upturned face show the same number as adjoining ones. To make a group of two touching dice sink slowly into the board you need to match the number two; six dice will disappear if you create six touching cubes all showing the number six. Add in chain reactions and a constant deluge of falling dice and it's got to be time for all but

the most spatially aware to crawl behind the sofa, clutching at their frontal lobes.

It's actually easier to grasp the basic idea when you play it, although mastery is likely to be a long way away for all but quantum physicists. An excellent tutorial explains the basics but, after that, *Devil Dice* isn't exactly gentle with you. Instead, you're thrown into a nightmarish dimension of infinite tumbling dice and – in the two-player Battle mode or, worse still, the eek!-five-devils-on-one-screen wars – viciously clever impish opponents.

It's a mark of *Devil Dice*'s quality that, despite your initial bewilderment, the whole dice shimmying concept eventually clicks into place. You begin to instinctively know what numbers are on the hidden faces of the dice and then it's just a case of your brain keeping up with the movements needed to get the right number on the upturned face to make chains of the things disappear.

Blessed by beautiful presentation and the chance for great multi-player battles, *Devil Dice* offers superior puzzling for anyone willing and, indeed, able to get their heads round it. Casual players will be better off with *Bust-A-Move*, but if you're willing to risk long-term addiction and possession by dice-treading demons, this puzzler will have your brain flipping over like its evil dotted cubes. ★★★★★ **Robin Alway**



■ Don't look it in the eyes – it'll steal your soul. Too late! Arghhh!

Or you could try...

Kula World
 SCE ★★★★★
 Roll a beach ball around Escher-like suspended structures.

Bust-A-Move 2
 Acclaim ★★★★★
 Bubble-popping two-player perfection at a Platinum price.

SENSELESS

FOOTBALL RETURNS TO GRASS ROOTS



Shanghai: True Valor

■ Publisher: **Activision**
 ■ Developer: **Sunsoft**
 ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Extras: **memory card**

The name promises oriental fighting action, but what you're actually getting is a match-the-pairs Chinese tile-based puzzler. It's all gone a bit mah jong.

■ Game Boy owners must have *Tetris*, and they must all love it and play it to death. It's the law. Yet despite the presence of a few excellent puzzle titles for the PlayStation, none are considered an essential purchase. *Shanghai: True Valor* conforms to this rule. Not because it's a high-quality sleeper like any of the *Bust-A-Move* series or *Super Puzzle Fighter*, but for very different reasons indeed.

The basic premise requires you to clear a screen of mah jong-style tiles by highlighting matching pairs, which then disappear. Some pleasant enough sub-Kung Fu muzak hums in the background as your apparently simple task unfolds. You can highlight only tiles that can slide left or right and the tiles are in piles, so only those that are on the top surface or completely revealed are in play. You can play against the clock or at your leisure, on your own or against an opponent, on a flat board or on the sides of a cube (*Rolling Shanghai*). And that's it.

No, that really is it because Sunsoft – despite having pinned down the puzzler must-haves of simple rules and variants of play – has created some kind of monster. Playing videogames gives you a headache, does it? Well, this one certainly will. Staring at a screen replete with 144 different tiles, many of which bear incredibly similar Chinese characters, will have you rubbing your eyes within minutes and is a feat that should not, under any circumstances, be attempted on a portable TV.

Many goes grind to a deadlocked halt, where you have to start all over again – just like when you play patience. And patience is a commodity that will certainly be in short supply after you've tried to remember the correct order for your 72 pairs of tiles and failed to finish *Shanghai* yet again. The unfortunate guy who memorised a whole pack of cards on *Record Breakers* had an easier task. Sunsoft has effectively made snap complex and even more boring. ★ **Paul Wilson**



■ **Sensible's new European Club Edition makes the world's favourite game frustratingly difficult – tackling is a nightmare and the passing game far too complex. A disappointing finish from the original footy icon, then.**

Uppers & Downers

Net

- Comprehensive management set-up
- The beauty of aftertouch
- Fine database of teams

Wet

- Non-existent passing game
- Niggly shooting problems
- Hideous commentary

still something that's particularly special about the original *Sensi*; something that keeps a little space in the hearts of all those people who played the original.

Which makes this tragically awful PlayStation "update" all the more disappointing. In fact, it's very difficult to see exactly how *Sensible Soccer European Club*

Edition could have been any worse. The Option screens are pitiful, with League and C up competitions taking the form of unreadable and indistinguishable "badges". Having to select an option then quit back out when it's not the one you want is staggeringly inept. Fortunately, this selection procedure is an oversight that's just about forgivable once you've traversed the excellent tactical set-up, which competes with *ISS '98* in terms of choice.

But that's where the similarities end. Where *ISS '98* went on to play flawless Brazilian-style football, *Sensi* opts for a trudgey, Third Division encounter between Torquay and Darlington. Why does the game make it so hard to change direction without losing the ball? How is the players' inability to pass anywhere but straight ahead a realistic rendition of football? Why, when you press the Shoot button, do players sometimes not shoot at all? Why does the standard of the computer sides have to be set so high and their players made so fast, that the tackling option might as well not exist? If you get within a 25-yard radius of an opposition player with an attempt at a tackle, you can deem that a fine endeavour.

Aftertouch – as expected in a *Sensi* game – does come into play. It's certainly a must when it comes to scoring goals, as you simply won't score without putting a bit of bend on the ball. And, once you get used to the game's blinding shortcomings, this feature does at least liven the proceedings up a little, with some spectacular goals quite possible. But, you shouldn't have to use aftertouch to play passes. Passing should be the simplest part of any football game. Oh, and no review of this game could go without a mention of the commentary, which is utterly appalling. There's no star names and no excitable shouting – just some bloke from down the pub mumbling on about the teams' missed opportunities. Imagine the most boring man you've ever met. Now get stuck in a lift with him.

All of which means *Sensi* has had its day. Where once we deemed it genius, the *European Club Edition* is a timely reminder of how things have changed. We may have hoped it wasn't all over. But it is now. ★★ **Tim Weaver**

Sensible Soccer European Club Edition

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive** ■ Developer: **Sensible/Krisalis** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-2**

Remember Sensible Soccer? How could you forget? In its day it was the greatest football game in the world and, possibly, the Amiga's finest moment. And now it's returned to the PlayStation, with a host of European clubs in tow. But can it stand up to the current heavyweights?

There are those old faithfuls who still believe *Sensible Soccer* to be the best football game on the planet. It isn't. *ISS*, *World League Soccer* and *Actua Soccer* have all taken Sensible's original blueprint, thrown in some next-generation dazzle and come out with a better all-round game at the other end. And yet, there is

Or you could try...

ISS Pro '98
 Konami: ★★★★★
 Quite simply the best football game to be found on the planet.

World League Soccer '99
 Eidos: ★★★★★
 Owen-endorsed footy – looks rubbish, plays like a dream.



Dodgegem Arena

■ Publisher: **Project Two Interactive** ■ Developer: **Formula Game Development**
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4**
 ■ Extras: **analogue controller, Dual Shock, memory card, link-up cable, multi-tap**

Project Two gazes into its future-sports crystal ball and comes up with all-new ice hockey in spaceships.

■ In 1975, the vision of sport in the 21st century was a violent, confrontational game called *Rollerball*. It starred James Caan and it was good. Twenty four years on, with less than 12 months remaining of this century, little has changed. Replace macho men on rollerskates with *WipEout*-style ships and you have *Dodgegem Arena*. Problem is, this particular peek into the future is flawed.

You pit your spaceship against three other opponents – CPU or human-controlled – in satisfyingly futuristic arenas, all swollen with pucks and power-ups. You must collect a puck and fire it towards a moving goal, thus accruing points and winning the game before the timer hits zero. Everyone is trying to do the same, so add weapons of mass destruction into the mix and it soon becomes an enjoyable battle for supremacy, particularly if there are four people playing.

But *Dodgegem* is only fun for a time. It quickly becomes a little samey and – dare it be said – boring. Now you might question how “different” many hundreds of games of *ISS Pro '98* or *Gran Turismo* really are, but they are played again and again because they're simulations of sports that people already love. Not *Dodgegem Arena*. It takes something really special to involve people in a sim of a sport that doesn't exist, and *Dodgegem Arena* just can't hold your attention for long enough.

The arenas are much as you'd expect from a futuresport game, with plenty of metal and flashing lights. They do look good but the sad fact is they're all variations on the same theme and there's very little satisfaction to be gained from just continuous progression through the “Story” mode.

Worst of all, the whole look and feel of *Dodgegem Arena* is a continual reminder of *WipEout*. Strange, you might think, because they're very different games. But if you're going to be so obvious about your influences, then you ought to try and live up to them. *Dodgegem Arena* doesn't even come close. ★★

Ben East



■ EA Sports' is increasingly making its games easier to play – it figures that the reason more adults don't play games is because they're too difficult.



WOODN'T IT BE NICE...

...TO MAKE A GREAT GOLF SIM? TIGER WOODS GIVES IT HIS BEST SHOT

Tiger Woods 99 PGA Tour Golf

■ Publisher: **EA Sports**
 ■ Developer: **EA Sports** ■ Price: **£39.99**
 ■ Release date: **29 January**
 ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Extras: **memory card**

Clubbed to death? *Actua Golf 3* might have recently made its way into your golfing hall of fame, but here comes Tiger Woods and he's got EA with him...

Shame. It was never really going to be called *Mark O'Meara Golf 99*, but maybe it should have been. Especially in a year where Tiger Woods has struggled to sweep all before him, while Mr O'Meara has been surging ahead and winning tournaments apparently just for fun.

Instead, of course, we get *Tiger Woods 99 PGA Tour Golf*, and it's just a bit too annoying. The minute you get going you're treated to a ridiculous sub-Block Rocking Beats soundtrack – unless you remember to turn it off before you start – ruining what is otherwise a great round of golf. When you do manage to trash the Chemical-esque accompaniment, the only

sounds you'll hear are the “thwack” of your club hitting the ball and the occasional crow squawking as you drive through the trees. You're only interrupted by Tiger's excitable voice when you've played a “Nice shot!”, and his is the only voice you'll hear. Overall this is a very limited repertoire, which is, well... rubbish.

And it's annoying too, because it's niggles like these that ruin a mighty fine effort. We could go on: the wind gusts about like you were stuck in the eye of a hurricane and the putting is ridiculous. After such wonderful approach shots, playing what amounts to curling on grass would be bad even before you get to the truly awful carpet tile-like square that pops up if you get near the hole.

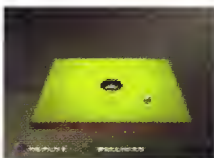
On the plus side *Tiger Woods 99* looks far better than *Actua 3*, and it is simple to pick up. EA Sports is making a concerted effort to make all of its games more accessible to the mainstream, and this is no exception. The five courses are well designed (based on real venues) and, this being an EA title, the range of options available is immense.

In the final analysis, Sony's own *Everybody's Golf* does the arcade thing far better and far more amusingly. But, like *FIFA 99*, *Tiger Woods 99* will outsell its competition by the millions – even though it's a good few strokes away from genius. ★★ ★★

Ben East

↑ Uppers & Downers

- Tiger**
- Smooth looks
 - Very simple to pick up
 - Proper players
- Tank**
- The putting is useless
 - Awful soundtrack
 - Too American



■ Forget crisp-clipped grass. In *Tiger Woods* you putt on a tile.

Or you could try...

Actua Golf 3
 Gremlin Interactive ★★★★★
 Giltz-free. A lovingly re-created golf sim.

Everybody's Golf
 SCE ★★★★★
 The most fun you'll ever have with a virtual golf club.



Pool Hustler

■ Publisher: **Sunsoft**
 ■ Developer: **Ask Co Ltd**
 ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**

Shirt: Mr Byrite. Slacks: Dad. Shoes: Dolcis plastic loafers. Fingers yellowed by B&H and pockets: awash with change and betting slips. Have you got what it takes to be a pool hustler?

■ Pool is perhaps not premium fare for transfer into the digital medium. Inherent in the game are elements that are hard to emulate when using a joystick. For example, difficult bridging and miscueing, not to mention the fags, booze and unsavoury old men who inhabit pool rooms nationwide.

However, *Pool Hustler* doesn't do badly. Even when shoehorned into a TV screen, the game offers taxing, competitive play which compensates for its shortcomings by simply being fun.

The physics of the game are the most vital element in a pool sim. Fortunately, here they appear to be on the money. Garish spheres dash about after the (obligatory) heavy handed stroke, infuriatingly rebounding off the jaws of the pockets and clacking together with such vigour one fears for ball splinter. Occasionally, they seem to roll on just a little too far, but this could be because we're only used to seeing them move while we're drunk.

There's more to playing pool than just pool, though. And in a valiant attempt to avoid *Pool Hustler* from becoming tedious, Sunsoft has imbued *Pool Hustler* with alterable facilities. There are six play modes, encompassing some splendid trick shot daftness and a tutorial. Five game styles are offered, including the classic eight-ball and nine-ball. Your success is measured by what best you win – you can stick a wager on a game, or indeed on a single shot. A tame attempt at a story prattles away in the background, while your single-player quest – to win greenbacks – wends its way across America. This betting is absent from the two-player tussle – the section where *Pool Hustler* excels. And after all what's to stop you placing a few real side bets?

Pool Hustler is an austere-looking, clinical rendering of pool. But what it lacks in atmosphere it makes up for in its playable, classical, idealistic vision of pool land. And there's no room for sozzled old men with damp pants in this title. Which is really no bad thing. ★★ ★ **Stephen Pierce**



Hugo

■ Publisher: **ITE Media**
 ■ Developer: **ITE Media**
 ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**

Just when you thought it was safe to frequent the game stores, edutainment hits the PlayStation.

■ Of course, you can see how it happened. PlayStation goes down in price; PlayStation bought by everyone. PlayStation played by infant-schoolers; concerned parents want offspring to play wholesome edutainment titles rather than nasty *Resi Evil*. Thus ITE designs games for parents to buy for the little darlings.

Sadly, though, if *Hugo* is the product of such reasoning, then we should burn our PlayStations now for fear of our children being turned into the cerebral equivalent of paving slabs. You see, *Hugo* isn't hard – it's thick.

A visual cross between Mario and a wino, *Hugo* is a troll who must overcome various challenges to rescue his wife Hugolina from the evil witch Sculla. That means

traversing rivers, flying planes, climbing up hills, skateboarding, scuba-diving and general task-solving. A panoply of activities designed to gently stretch the young mind? In real life maybe, but in *Hugo* the majority of the above can be resolved by pressing Left or Right. True, the more taxing activities require Up, Down or (whisper it) even Jump, but for the most part, that's it.

Again, you can see why ITE did it. Hand-eye co-ordination, a basic fairytale plot, wholesome characters and so on. Sadly, while these are all notions worthy of inclusion in a child-oriented game, ITE seems to have overlooked a few basic things; that you can get all these by the bucketload in superior games such as *Spyro*; that '90s children are more game literate than ever before; and (most importantly) that all of these are already hammered into four-year-olds at nursery school. Advertised as being "designed for children aged 6+", *Hugo* will come off as simplistic at best, patronising at worst – a real shame given the quality of edutainment titles that could be ported from PC and Mac.

On the briefly positive side, the bold graphics might hold the attention of pre-schoolers and *Hugo* himself could be mistaken for cute, but more likely your kids will be bored out of their minds by *Hugo*'s repetitive gameplay and irksome characters. Buy them *Spyro*, buy them books, buy them anything unless you enjoy making children cry. ★ **Mike Goldsmith**



Rushdown

■ Publisher: **Infogrames**
 ■ Developer: **CANAL**
 ■ Multimedia: ■ Price: **£34.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-2**

Infogrames cordially invites you to bike, boat and board yourself stupid in sports even more dangerous than a kebab house after the hour of 11.

■ Rad! Cool! Stoked! And other extreme-sport adjectives. With a few exceptions (*Cool Boarders 2* and *3* and *1080°*) such exaltations have been wholly inappropriate for any of the Pepsi Max-swigging "adrenaline sports" games we've seen so far. In fact, play *Rushdown* and a good, old-fashioned, English "Arse!" springs to mind.

There are three dangerous pastimes to bloody your 300 quid cagoule on here – snowboarding, kayaking and mountain biking. Thus you have snow, rapids and dirt tracks to negotiate, and either the clock (Arcade mode) or an opponent (in the Championship game) to beat. But the only real

variety is the scenery that rushes past your ridiculous head apparel. Developer CANAL has used the same basic graphics engine for each section; a trick that would be absolutely fine if it wasn't such a clunking old thing, held together with the game coders equivalent of string and chewing gum.

Hurtle your way down any of *Rushdown*'s inclines and you can only grind your teeth at the poorly programmed mess that faces you. As well as experiencing the excruciating animation and general "not right" look of the contestants, there's some serious problems with collision detection. *Rushdown* lets you ride straight through seemingly solid obstacles, only to make you fall over some way further on, when the game realises what's happened.

There's 15 courses but they're all nondescript downhill runs with a smattering of obstacles. Despite a fair sensation of speed, you'll have to force yourself to keep sliding/paddling/peddalling all the way to the line, in what amounts to a simple left-right racing game with a distinct lack of "radness". And things don't improve in the two-player races; something you can almost always rely on to up the excitement factor a few notches. There's probably a place out there for a well-programmed, adrenal gland-prodding extreme sports game, but *Rushdown* isn't what the market's waiting for. Ultimately the only extreme thing about it is the level of boredom it will induce. ★ **Robin Alway**

PlayStation budget round-up

by Robin Alway

Lucky enough to have 20 quid burning a hole in your January-sale jeans pocket? Remember the wise words of your parents: "A bargain's only a bargain if it's something you need." And then thank your lucky stars you've left home and can spend your cash on what you want. We check out the latest titles to hit Platinum.



Hercules

■ Publisher: **Sony** ■ Developer: **Disney Interactive** ■ Price: **£19.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**

■ Selling in Carol Vorderman-troublingly huge numbers on its original full price release, *Hercules* is very much the sort of thing we've come to expect from the videogame-producing appendage of Disney. It's a 2D platformer with some lovely looking characters and backdrops, but about as much love and imagination has gone into its production as into the Happy Meal or licensed slippers bearing the name of the same film.

The only thing that makes *Hercules*

different to the likes of *Aladdin* on the SNES or Mega Drive are the introduction of some Crash Bandicoot-style 3D sections where you run into the screen along a narrow path. It's not *Mario* in terms of freedom of movement, but the 3D bits do at least make a welcome break from the rather more traditional 2D platforming half of the game.

Spread over ten levels, all of which capture the look of the film, you collect coins and urns, using Hercules' sword to bash enemies and the inevitable end of level bosses. Restart points are tricky placed to ensure much feet stamping and red faces among the game's obvious younger target audience.

Of course at £20 this is a purchase designed to please PlayStation's smaller players who've succumbed to Disney brainwashing. The cut scenes are taken straight from the film and the characters all look great, despite lacking the sort of fluid animation that would bring old Walt out of cryo sleep. Unfortunately, though, in terms of platforming pleasure it's all very average. Like a visit to a Disney Shop, it all looks nice enough, but unless you're six or under you don't want to stay there for any length of time. ★★



Soul Blade

■ Publisher: **Sony** ■ Developer: **Namco**
 ■ Price: **£19.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**

■ With *Tekken 3*'s assault on the senses still mind-reelingly fresh in the memory, it's easy to forget about Namco's other superb fighting franchise: *Soul Blade*. Which would be a pity, because in replacing the sound of *Tekken*'s bone-crunching hits with the almighty clang of weapon-based fighting, *Soul Blade* has easily become one of the finest beat-'em-ups on the PlayStation and a real bargain at 20 quid.

The cast of characters might not be as familiar as that of *Tekken*, but Namco isn't

exactly fielding a reserve team, either. Each of the ten fighters are made more distinctive because of their own choice of weapon, taking in broad swords, spears and – in the case of gimp mask-wearing Voldo – razor-blade gloves. They all carve through the air leaving trails of energy, indicative of *Soul Blade*'s lavish *Sword and Sorcery* look. If anything, the backgrounds are superior to those in *Tekken 3*, with fights taking place on moving rafts and lighting effects seemingly produced by God's own angle-poise.

In terms of fighting, the more expert scrappers might be slightly disappointed by a lack of depth in *Soul Blade*'s rucks. Ditching *Tekken*'s one-button-for-each-limb policy, you can string together combos with ease and your Nan could pull off an incredibly impressive-looking special move with three jabs of the same button. You just don't get the same complicated-but-satisfying rewards that *Tekken* offers to the well-practised player.

If you prefer to get a martial arts film-like period of long, painstaking training from your beat-'em-ups, *Soul Blade* can come across as a flashy, sword twirling show-off. It's not *Tekken* after a trip to ye olde weapons warehouse, but thanks to *Soul Blade*'s classy presentation (the orchestral soundtrack is particularly stirring), great characters and an involving story mode, *Soul Blade* is a beat-'em-up to savour. That, and the fact that you're swinging razor sharp metal through the air, gives it a spectacular and epic feel all of its own that you need to sample at this knock down price. ★★ ★ ★

New PC Games

Arcade
PC
Game of
the Month



UNBELIEVER

CORVUS RETURNS – FIGHTING BUGS 'N' TRADING SPELLS

Heretic II

■ Publisher: **Activision** ■ Developer: **Raven Software**
■ Price: **£29.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-32**
■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb RAM, 4x CD-ROM drive, Win 95**
■ Recommended: **P11 233MHz, 64Mb RAM, 3D accelerator card**

Id Software's pal Raven has given the *Quake II* code a third-person perspective twist with the follow-up to its 1993 Doom-engined hit.

You can have too much of a good thing. Soon the Earth will be comprised almost entirely of graphically impressive first-person-perspective shoot-'em-ups. Everyone over the age of 19, it seems, is working on one. The gaming world is still reeling from *Half-Life* and *Shogo*. *Thief: The Dark Project* is just around the corner, and there's a whole battalion of high-profile blockbusters storming noisily behind it. So Raven's decision

■ Despite its bugs, *Heretic II* lets you play with some excellent weapons – showing them off with glorious graphics.



■ Get yourself a 3D accelerator card if you're a *Heretic* fan. The graphics really come to life in the deeply hued fights scenes.

to switch *Heretic II* to a third-person view seems remarkably astute, since it gives this sequel a fighting chance to stand out from a very rowdy crowd.

In terms of structure and setting, though, *Heretic II* is utterly traditional. It's a defiantly old-"skool" fantasy shooter, very much in the mould of its prequel. There is, of course, lots of blather in the manual about: "the five races of Parthoris", "the Celestial Watcher" and "the Day of Darkness", but it's all a load of toss, really. You run around blasting monsters. Every now and then you have to press a button to open a door. And that's pretty much it.

So all hopes, originality-wise, rest on the new perspective. And, unfortunately, first impressions are somewhat poor. All Raven seems to have done is take the *Quake II* engine and slap a bloke in place of the gun. Indeed one of the very first things you'll do on the training level is to push a barrel around the room without, apparently, touching it. Your "walking" animation remains unnaturally unchanged – with no appearance of strain – as you belly-push the thing in front of you. Even the three-year-old *Tomb Raider* offers better character/object interaction than this.

Bad videogame vibes continue to sour your appreciation of the game, as you observe your third-person alter-ego sliding unconvincingly sideways as though on ice, and then standing on a ledge with both feet clearly over the edge. You'll try launching a few fireballs and find it almost impossible to aim correctly. Should the target be just to the right of the ear, or slightly above the head? After the easy precision of a first-person shooter, this new set-up will initially feel distressingly random. However, if you indulge yourself in the weapon systems, learn a slightly new set of rules and get used to the auto-aim, you'll soon find yourself absorbed in a splendid game with well-designed levels, some neat new features and truly magical special effects.

Despite the fact that he initially handles like a stubborn cow, *Heretic* deserves praise for its athletic central character.

After you've spent a few minutes getting used to the ever-so-slightly complicated control system, you'll have Corvus (the hero, if you remember, of the original game) leaping and climbing with minimal hassle on your part.

He's certainly a lot more responsive to your control than Ms L Croft – and has a couple of excellent moves all his own, too. Corvus can swing to and fro while hanging from a rope, which is great, but even better is his pole-vault jump, which can also be adapted to produce a brutally effective and spectacular head-kicking attack move.

Heretic II is also supplied with an awesome selection of weapons and spells that it places at its hero's disposal. Apart from a fine variety of staff-based mêlée attacks (of which the head-kick mentioned above is the most satisfying), Corvus has a handy little fireball at his disposal. And, being a thoughtful kind of mystic, he also learns some more impressive spells as he travels around and can equip himself with some lovely magical weapons.

Combat effects are beautifully painted in glowing reds, greens and yellows, and look especially glorious if your computer's blessed with a 3D accelerator card. The Storm Bow, in particular, affords a visual treat of the highest order, as its arrows burst into deep red thunderstorms of strength-sapping rain and murderous lightning bolts.


All these effects are neatly complemented by a series of "defensive" spells that can be activated whenever you have accumulated sufficient "mana" to pay for them. These complementary magics can repel enemies, teleport you to safety or – most effectively of all – power up your offensive capabilities for a limited time. Used judiciously, they can result in some awesome scenes of colourful carnage.

It's disappointing, though, to find a higher-than-usual bug quotient in a fully finished boxed copy of a game.

Corvus loses the ability to walk forwards every now and then, some of the atmospheric sound effects crop up in the wrong places, airborne creatures are prone to lying "dead" in mid-air and you can, in a few areas, find that your explorations have led you "out of bounds", with no way back. And the "quick save" doesn't work, either.

But these are minor gripes, and will no doubt be fixed by the inevitably soon-to-appear patch (a procedure that seems to have become the norm for all new PC games).

Super to look at, full of action and blessed with some half-intelligent monsters, *Heretic II* has a lot going for it. Its run-and-shoot gameplay doesn't break any new ground; its puzzles may seem under-involving, and its lack of character interaction disappointing in the wake of *Half-Life*, but when all that is said and done, it's a worthy and well-wrought romp nonetheless. ★★ ★★

Jonathan Smith 

RAVEN'S DECISION TO SWITCH HERETIC II TO THIRD-PERSON SEEMS REMARKABLY ASTUTE

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Magic

- Slick, fast-moving and fun
- Superb weapons and spells
- Fantastic graphical effects

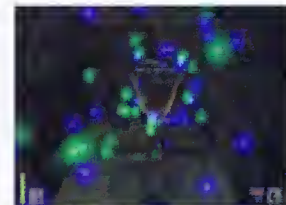
Tragic

- Not exactly ground-breaking
- Cursed with a few bugs
- A touch monotonous

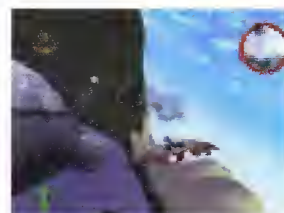
Or you could try...

Tomb Raider III
Eidos Interactive ★★★★★
Slower-paced than *Heretic II*, but harder, more varied and more dramatic. A true epic.

Half Life
Sierra ★★★★★
The same basic graphics engine as this one, but a subtler game – one of the finest ever.



■ He might be hard to control, but the third-person Corvus comes supplied with weapons that can piss all over *Heretic II*'s monsters.



■ Think of *Rogue Squadron* as the kiddies' end of the *SW* pool and you'll get the idea.

LUKE WARM

THEY SHOULD HAVE USED A LITTLE BIT MORE FORCE

Rogue Squadron

■ Publisher: **Activision** ■ Developer: **LucasArts** ■ Price: **£35** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1** ■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb RAM, 60Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, 3D accelerator card, soundcard, Win 95/98** ■ Recommended: **joystick**

Returning to its arcade roots, the latest *Star Wars* tie-in is a case of aim, fire and repeat to fade. It's the opening level of *Shadows Of The Empire*, used to sustain a whole game. Bad idea.

Given that LucasArts has a well deserved reputation for being one of the most talented and foresighted developers in the PC industry, *Rogue Squadron* is a big, fat disappointment.

With *X-wing*, *TIE Fighter*, and the cunningly titled sequel, *X-wing vs TIE Fighter*, the company revolutionised the space combat genre. It succeeded in creating a believable, multi-faceted and immensely enjoyable trilogy of *Star Wars*-flavoured action.

Which begs the question: "Why has LucasArts chosen to release *Rogue Squadron*, and take what's essentially a huge





■ Wow, the Battle of Hoth... again. Thermals on. We're going in.

step down from the lofty heights of intricacy that the previous games achieved?" Obviously it's a way of cashing in on the hype currently surrounding the forthcoming film, *Episode 1: The Phantom Menace*. But as a showcase for the *Star Wars* universe, it's distinctly average.

In essence *Rogue Squadron* is little more than an extended version of *Shadows Of The Empire's* opening level, which recreated the Battle of Hoth. The terrain, enemies and choice of craft are widened a little but very little else has changed.

The 16 missions see you flying in either first or third-person over subtly different planetary surfaces – from the deserts of Tatooine and the icy wastes of Hoth, through to the open-air environs of Cloud City. Within each scenario you must achieve multiple mission objectives in order to guarantee success. These generally involve protecting Rebel ships, or destroying key Imperial strongholds, as well as occasionally disabling craft in order to facilitate rescues.

In its way, it's like *X-wing* but, sadly, it dumbs it down in almost every single area. *X-wing's* subtleties: wingman commands, shield settings, many alternative secondary weapons and targeting, are left out, in favour of repetitive, no-brainer blasting.

It's blatantly obvious that *Rogue Squadron* isn't a serious addition to LucasArts' *Star Wars* catalogue. John Williams' spine-tingling score has been reduced to a shrill MIDI approximation, while the interfaces of previous *SW* games

that bustled with training grounds, encyclopedias of the universe and ship hangars, are conspicuous only by their absence. The multi-player option has been

omitted, leaving *Rogue Squadron* as little more than a blaster that deserves to be found in an arcade cabinet asking 50p a throw, rather than sitting on a shelf asking £35.

Indicative of the game's simple structure is the way in which the planets' playing areas are so obviously finite. The *X-wing* series (being set in space) always gave the impression of limitless flying distances. Not so in *Rogue Squadron*. Fly in any direction for about a minute, and your ship will be pushed back into the required playing

area. Successfully evading guided missiles and persistent TIEs is therefore a problem as your ship often takes multiple hits thanks to these invisible boundaries.

It's also apparent, from the feeble draw distances to the bland ground textures and soundtrack, that this PC version is a direct port of the N64's. That said, it's refreshing to find a PC game that you can master in minutes. And despite all its faults, it's difficult not to enjoy *Rogue Squadron* while

it lasts. The sights of TIE Fighters, AT-ATs and even the diminutive stormtroopers still elicit a thrill.

The downside is that if you're a reasonably competent gamer, you'll have beaten *Rogue Squadron* inside a week. Do this and you get the chance to play the same missions using different ships, bettering your stats in exchange for gold, silver or bronze medals.

It's little reward though, since the end sequence is one of the poorest you'll have seen in a long time. ★★ ★

Matthew Pierce 



■ X-wingery made extremely easy.

↑ Uppers & Downers

Rebellion

- The speed and action are relentless
- Terrifyingly realistic AT-ATs
- Han and Chewie make an appearance

Empire

- Far too easy
- The new ships are feeble
- Lacks depth and complexity

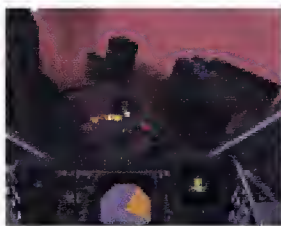
Or you could try...

Tie Fighter

LucasArts ★★★★★
The second in the X-Wing trilogy offers the finest single-player *Star Wars* action yet.

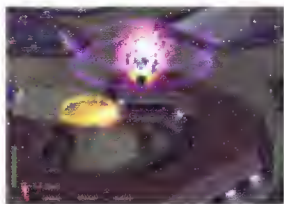
Shadows Of The Empire

LucasArts ★★★★★
An eclectic mixture of genres. Distinctly hit and miss, but short-term fun nevertheless.



■ *Rogue Squadron's* major challenge is to try and get an ounce of power or fun out of flying the Y-wings.





Future Cop: LAPD

■ Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
 ■ Developer: **Electronic Arts**
 ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Requires: **P150, 32Mb RAM, 60Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, graphics card, Win 95**
 ■ Recommended: **P200, 64Mb RAM, 180Mb HD space, 3D accelerator card, soundcard**

Panda cars and nightsticks are replaced with heavily armoured robots and an array of missiles.

■ With its quirky camera work and cops-and-robbers scenario, *Future Cop: LAPD* has to be a contender for the position of first docusoap game. It follows a one-man mission against the pimps, arms dealers and wannabe despots out to take over an unrecognisably futuristic City of Angels. Within this walled metropolis lurk armies of yellow-shirted henchmen, huge gun towers, tanks and flying gunships, all designed with a nod to *Blade Runner's* similarly dark leanings. Controlling the new future of law enforcement – an adaptable walking machine armed with chain guns, missiles and mortars – you must uphold the law by eradicating anything in their path.

It's a simple premise for what is a simple, yet beautifully crafted, shooting gallery. The twitchy camera follows your walker as it struts from one linear level to the next, while you pick off the bad guys and their legions of aides. On paper, *Future Cop* pounds a familiar beat, but the implementation of its many features within a simple control system creates an enormously enjoyable game. While you have full control over the walker and its armaments, everything is boiled down to a totally instinctive level. You access each of the three weapons via separate buttons, and targeting is automatically catered for via red laser beams and a lock-on system. All that remains is for you to explore the labyrinthine stages in search of the objectives established by laughably tongue-in-cheek film footage at the start of the level. And there lies the rub.

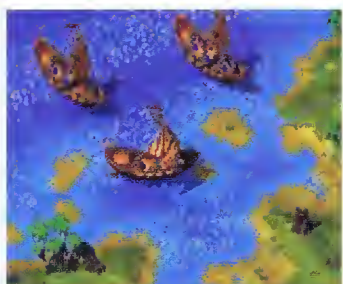
As is often the case in accessible shoot-'em-ups, *Future Cop's* simplicity is ultimately its downfall. While picking off the many vehicles is satisfying (the explosions seem to rock the screen), the basic pattern of taking out key installations needs fleshing out – even the well-realised two-player mode can't save it. ★★ **Steve Merrett**

DIVINE

CHOOSE YOUR SUIT, IT'S TIME TO DD BATTLE



■ **A happy little Chinese settlement, replete with archers; an Egyptian military outpost ready for anything; and archers stand at the rear while swordsmen get stuck in. Battle can also be conducted on the high seas. You'll notice that the architecture of the settlements is idiosyncratic of the race that it's built by.**



↑↓ Uppers & Downers

God-like

- Detailed graphics
- You could play it forever
- Complex, intriguing and intelligent

Dog-like

- The combat lacks pace and action
- Not enough variety in the races
- Can be heavy on the head

The Settlers III

■ Publisher: **Blue Byte** ■ Developer: **Blue Byte** ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1** ■ Requires: **P100, 32Mb RAM, 200Mb HD space, 2x CD-ROM, 2Mb graphics card, Win 95/NT 4**
 ■ Recommended: **P166, soundcard, 28.8kbps modem for Internet play**

Blue Byte returns with its own peculiar and lovable brand of god sim. Yes, the Settlers are back for a third go.

So you wanna play god, hmm? Let's run down the old theological list: unquenchable thirst for power? Check. The desire to see hundreds of scurrying minions do your bidding? Check. The ability to cause natural disasters on a scale traditionally reserved for more tropical climes? Check. Right, looks like we're all set then; the world is your oyster.

In their third outing, *The Settlers* have become more worldly wise, more technically minded, and feistier into the bargain. *The Settlers* (1994) dealt mainly with the acquisition of land; it was a god sim without the fighting and, as such, offered an engrossing and complex experience yet one that always seemed to lack that certain something. *The Settlers II* (1996) boasted a more user-friendly interface, better graphics and more in the way

A TIME-DIGESTING, INTRICATELY STRUCTURED AND ENJOYABLE GAME

of cultural clashes; there was no combat you could directly control, but your little people would bash away at each other with gusto.

But with its third offering, German developer Blue Byte has succinctly married development concerns and military weight to produce a time-digesting, intricately structured and downright enjoyable strategy game. The Germans typically tone down the violence in their computer games, and here the swords-and-shields element is limited – you'll only need to engage the enemy when things start getting hairy. Consider the fighting a pinch of piquant spice in a delicious bubbling broth of resource management, town construction and displays of divine power.

Since *The Settlers II*, the control system has been refined for ease of use. That's not to say it's a simple game; far from it. There are so many levels of resource and manpower dependency that, as your cities grow, so will the list of things that can fall into chaos and cause extreme shortages for your people. Coping with growth becomes an art in itself.

So there you have it, a plum of a game. The only criticism is that it can be disorientating for the novice. ★★ ★ **Alex Bickham**

Or you could try...

The Settlers II
 Blue Byte ★★ ★
 Lacking the combat element of the latest release.

Age Of Empires
 Microsoft ★★ ★★
 A game that involves taking over the world. From Bill Gates.



■ If your weapon doesn't seem powerful enough, go and find another one – you can use two at once for twice the bloodshed.



Asghan

■ Publisher: **Grolier Interactive** ■ Developer: **Grolier Interactive** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1** ■ Requires: **P120, 16Mb RAM, 20Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, SVGA, Win 95** ■ Recommended: **P200, 32Mb RAM, 8x CD-ROM drive, Soundblaster soundcard, 3Dfx-compatible 3D accelerator card**

Throw elements of role-playing and first-person shooting into a pot, then pour the resulting mixture into a Tomb Raider mould to get the sword-'n'-sorcery tale of Asghan.

■ Isn't it funny how games that improve on an older title rarely acknowledge their predecessor's existence? Take *Tomb Raider*. You don't often hear how much debt it owes to the ground-breaking *Fade to Black*, but loads of *AL* (After Lara) games that are... well, a bit ropy, are classed as *Tomb Raider* clones or rip-offs. The latest release to be influenced by *Tomb Raider* is *Asghan*.

Asghan's beardy plot involves the titular hero returning from a dragon-slaying mission to find his uncle Morghan causing all sorts of evil magical malarkey. The plot is rudimentary sub-Tolkien fare, woven around a third-person search and slash-'em-up. Steer *Asghan* around a series of pretty locations, whacking all manner of mystical characters with your sword, casting the odd spell and solving puzzles to reach a final confrontation with Morghan. As well as using your hefty blade and the odd incantation, you can drop into the first-person "crossbow mode" for dispatching enemies with a carefully aimed arrow.

With beautifully detailed characters and scenery to back up the puzzles, along with a range of views and a complex selection of combat moves, *Asghan* should succeed where post-*TR* titles such as *Deathtrap Dungeon* failed. Unfortunately, though, it has a few shortcomings. First, the awkward controls make sword combat more a case of random button-bashing than a dramatic Zorro-style fencing match, while long-range combat is hampered by dreadful aiming functions and limited ammunition. The puzzles are either too obscure or obvious to allow the plot to unfold naturally. Only fluid, athletic animation and dynamic movement through the levels could save it now... Bugger. ★ **Maff Evans**

BLOODY SEQUEL

GORE-SOAKED FIRST-PERSON FRENZY

Blood II: The Chosen

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive** ■ Developer: **Monolith Productions** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-32** ■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb RAM, 200Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, DirectX-compatible graphics card, DirectX-compatible soundcard, Win 95** ■ Recommended: **Direct3D-compatible 3D accelerator card**

Great mysteries of our time #23: Why make a sequel to a game that was universally described as a load of old rubbish? Answers on a postcard to...

Yes, the original *Blood* was a stinker. For starters, while the rest of the world was gearing up to full-on polygonal 3D in the *Quake* mould, *Blood* did its stuff using the creaky old Build engine, previously seen powering *Duke Nukem 3D* more than a year beforehand. And then there was the question of difficulty; it went from preposterously hard to nigh-on impossible. Basically, no-one bothered to play *Blood* for more than a few levels because they were getting killed far too often and the game looked terrible.

It had quite a good living-dead-style story, though, and you'd have to guess that it's that aspect alone that's resurrected *Blood* for a second go. And what do you know? This is one sequel that's far superior to its predecessor. What are the chances of that happening?

Fair warning, though; *Blood II: The Chosen* is still monumentally tough. It's not as unfairly difficult as *Blood* – you stand a chance of making it through the first few levels without getting killed in an unwarranted way – but you can forget about an easy ride. You'll probably forgive it however, because its looks are infinitely superior.

Uppers & Downers

- Haemoglobin**
- Engaging plot
 - Entertaining armaments
 - Sound game engine
- Haemorrhoid**
- Not as good as the competition
 - No immediate difference in the characters

Everything's powered by Monolith's LithTech engine, which moves quickly and comes close to the sort of things that *Unreal* and *Quake II* can do. A variety of imaginative locations await and they're filled with the inevitable bad guys gunning for your head, so you'll need some weapons.

And that's where *Blood II* provides the most thrills. Forget pistols and sub-machine guns, you'll have much more fun dishing out hot, fiery death through the misuse of a flare gun, or reducing your foes to atomic size with a handy singularity generator. Unfortunately, there's no sign of *Blood's* pitchfork or comedy aerosol/lighter combo.

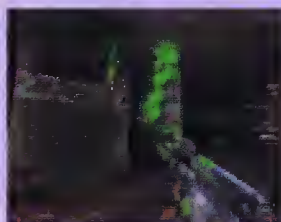
There are four characters to choose from, and these have supposedly differing abilities, but this is something you'll only notice after hours of play. Thrown into the mix are loads of guns, a strong story split into plenty of chapters (levels) and a non-stop array of ways to kill or be killed. It's a heady mixture, and yet it falls short of the standard set by the likes of *Half-Life* and *Unreal*. It is fast though, so if you miss the speed of *Doom* you might well find *Blood II* worth a look. ★★ ★

Travis

Or you could try...

Half-Life
Sierra Studios ★★★★★
Possibly the greatest moment ever in first-person gaming

Shogo MAD
Microbots ★★★★★
A combination of standard shooter action and crazy manga giant robot insanity



■ Good action, top weapons, okay story, but dull levels.



Grand Touring

■ Publisher: **Empire**
 ■ Developer: **Elite** ■ Price:
£34.99 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-7** ■ Requires:
P166, 32Mb RAM, 40Mb HD space, CD-ROM drive
 ■ Recommended: **modem for Internet play**

Race saloon and touring cars around some gorgeous-looking street and country tracks. Reminds us of something we've seen before. Maybe it's the name...

■ On your first play of *Grand Touring*, you'll be struck by the detail of the landscape. It looks lovely – clear and crisp, stretching all the way to the horizon. You may even avert your eyes from the road in order to marvel at the scenery. Is that a tower block in the distance? Why yes. Is it subtly illuminated when you round the same bend in the night-time mode? Indeed. Is that a family of swallows gliding perilously in front of your windscreen? The anatomical details are faultless.

All things considered, it's a shame that *Grand Touring* is otherwise such a dull experience. There's a certain PlayStation game which it's evidently trying to emulate and, while the basics are the same – Arcade or Simulation modes, advanced opponent AI, championship tournaments, the ability to tinker with your car's insides – *Grand Touring* is little more than a pale PC imitation of its close namesake.

For a start, the range of flash automobiles is too stingy for this game to become essential to motoring geeks. There are 20 cars available, but they're not even official models, so you lose a level of realism straight away – even with the addition of 20 tracks from across the world. Altering engine parts can make a slight difference to your car's speed and movement, but it's difficult to detect any improvement to the handling as *Grand Touring's* steering is such a trying process.

If a game is attempting to recreate a top speed racing experience, the controls must react to split-second decisions, otherwise your car will be skidding into the sand on every corner. *Grand Touring* is noticeably sluggish in this department, reacting slowly and then lurching too far in the required direction. As if to balance this fault, the whole game is simply too slow – the speed counter is generally contradicted by what you actually see. To complete the picture, your

WAR CRY

TAKE TO THE COLD WAR SKIES

Apache Havoc

■ Publisher: **Empire** ■ Developer: **Razorworks** ■ Price:
£39.99 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-8**
 ■ Requires: **P200, 16Mb RAM, Win 95** ■ Recommended:
3D accelerator card

Relive that bit from *Apocalypse Now* in the comfort of your living room with the PC's finest helicopter sim. It's big, it's complex, and it's scary.

In this post-Cold War politically correct world it's important not to take sides, or perhaps instead to see both sides of the conflict. So, while you might already be familiar with the US attack helicopter the Apache Longbow, did you know that there's also a Russian equivalent called the Havoc?

Play *Apache Havoc* and you get the opportunity to fly either of the two helicopters across three campaigns, working on one-or-other side of the conflict. You might be a US ally or a force who has invested in Russian equipment and roped the Reds into helping.

The campaigns themselves, like those in DiD's *Total Air War*, are dynamic: there's no set list of missions – there's no carefully constructed story line and no difficulty weighting. Instead you find yourself plonked in a unit at

Uppers & Downers

Choppers
 ■ Extremely complex and very believable
 ■ Spot-on simulation
 ■ Fantastic graphics

Penny-farthings
 ■ Starts very slowly
 ■ You have to behave yourself
 ■ Easy to get shot down

the start of a war – a war that continues around you, independently of your actions. You can choose which missions you want to fly, with the more complex and tricky sorties affecting small elements of the overall war.

Each *Apache Havoc* campaign has a time limit, within which you must prove yourself. Fly a successful mission and the time's increased. Crash, die, shoot down the good guys, or just be crap and the timer heads zero-wards.

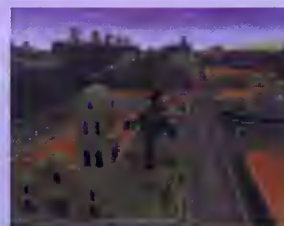
It's a fantastic looking game, although you really need a 3Dfx card if you're going to see the battle zones in all their glory. You get real-time lighting, variable weather, colourful skies that show the time of day and massive explosions; in short, loads of eye candy to distract you from the task in hand. But it's also incredibly difficult. Both helicopters are modelled with anal accuracy, and if you've never flown one before (either virtually or otherwise), you might be surprised how hard they are to move and keep in the air simultaneously. Combine this predicament with staying low and firing your weapons and you're in for a real challenge. ★★★★★

Steve Owen

Or you could try...

Commander 3
 Novologic ★★★★★
 Easier to play, Novologic's combat sim is a better place to enter the genre.

Apache Longbow
 Sold Out ★★★★★
 Digital Integration's aged-but-involving sim is another great way to start.

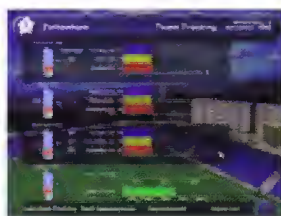


■ While you might be flying one of two helicopters, there're loads of extra vehicles and warships in the area. The large cities make excellent hiding places for rebels with causes.

engine emits a decidedly reluctant hum, as if you were trying to drive the vehicle through treacle.

With all this said, the Championship option becomes a distinctly uninviting prospect. Each race consists of ten turgid laps, and you're in serious danger of falling asleep at the wheel. At least you'll have some nice scenery to look at when you wake up. ★★

Sam Richards



Player Manager Season 98-99

■ Publisher: **ANCO Software**
 ■ Developer: **ANCO Software**
 ■ Price: **£29.99** ■ Release date:
on sale now ■ Players: **1**
 ■ Requires: **P120, 32Mb RAM, 35Mb HD space, Win 95**
 ■ Recommended: **P166**

Take control of any league team and, through astute management, guide your club to European glory.

■ This isn't a new genre, but *Player Manager Season 98-99* breaks with recent tradition by largely ignoring the financial side of the game. Here your input is confined to keeping the wage bill

under control and ordering an occasional bit of building work to increase stadium capacity. This leaves you plenty of time to concentrate on what Mr Gullit would no doubt call the sexier side of management; namely transfers, training and tactics.

And concentrate you must, because each player in the game not only has 20-or-so different ratings in the usual categories (stamina, passing and so on), but also a "unique personality", created with the addition of 22 invisible stats. Well the fog of war is a common enough concept, but the fog of football anyone?

Of course we would be quite happy to try and get inside our players' heads. We could then figure out if they missed that tackle because they're lonely or nervous, or whether they're just rubbish. But, sadly, the end result just isn't worth the effort. Worse still, come match day neither the 2D or 3D representations offer many reasons to keep you playing for long.

Whichever formation and tactics you employ, virtually every

goal occurs the same way, as the goalkeeper parries a shot straight to an incoming forward. You can play an entire season without seeing a header hit the target, even if your tactics call for two wingers to get crosses in. Conversely, when you find a winning formation, your team tends to keep winning no matter how much you mess about with the selection procedures.

A final nail in the game's coffin comes from the training and tactics sections. These are generally excellent, but because they don't bear enough relevance to what goes on during the actual match they are wasted.

This is a major disappointment all round. ★

Glen Weston





Jane's Combat Simulations: WWII Fighters

■ Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
 ■ Developer: **Electronic Arts**
 ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1 - network game** ■ Requires: **PII 200MHz, 32Mb RAM, Glide or Direct 3D graphics accelerator card, Win 95**
 ■ Recommended: **PII 300MHz, 64Mb RAM** ■ Extras: **supports joysticks, modem for Internet play, network**

This WWII flight sim is based around the Ardennes offensive of December 1944 to January 1945.

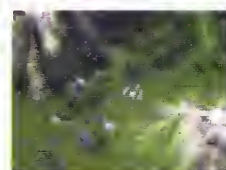
■ Walk out on to the runway of this *Jane's Combat* sim and you can choose to fly planes from either side of the battle, including the ubiquitous Mustang or FW-190. Once you actually get your wheels off the tarmac, you can try out the free flight option – this gives you the chance to get the hang of your plane without being shot at. Moving on from this there are quick dogfights, standalone missions and the obligatory long campaigns that enable you to play as a pilot from either of the two sides throughout the offensive.

The planes are beautifully rendered with superb texture maps, and the ground looks realistic, showing the snowy Ardennes forests and muddy patchwork of fields, all shrouded in winter mists and low clouds.

Unfortunately, what counts isn't how the ground looks, it's how hard you hit it: at the harder difficulty levels, you can be as much of a menace to yourself as the enemy. Put your plane into a steep dive then try to pull out suddenly and there's a good chance that the strain will pull your wings off. Battle damage is also realistically simulated and there's a wealth of detail in the cockpit, too.

If you don't like the look of the provided WWII missions, you can use the Mission Builder to knock together your own, and if even that pales after a while, you can link up with other players over a LAN or Internet connection.

★★★★ **Jim Chandler**



■ These pictures can't hope to convey the sheer torture of six-hours of solid exposure to Jeff Wayne's experimental noises.

MARS ATTACKS

THE GAME OF THE MUSICAL OF THE BOOK

Jeff Wayne's 'War Of The Worlds'

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive** ■ Developer: **Rage Software** ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1** ■ Requires: **P166, 16Mb RAM, 120Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, 1Mb graphics card, 16-bit soundcard**
 ■ Recommended: **P266, 32Mb RAM, 2Mb graphics card**

When Jeff's '70s synth opus, Victorian novelist HG Wells and videogames got into bed together the result could only be a one-night stand and a hangover.

Programmer Rage has managed to produce a game that looks as dated as Jeff "Woo Woo" Wayne's radiophonic workshop classic sounds. Only HG Wells has escaped with his good name intact, and this is largely because his novel has been buried – almost invisible underneath an Earth vs Mars real-time strategy-fest that melds *Risk* and *Command & Conquer* with worryingly limited success.

The *Risk* element comes in the shape of a

strategic map of the UK. From here you can shunt your units around, decide which sector you'd like to conquer next and choose where to build more facilities and defences.

Freakishly, there are no missions. You battle for this map (as either the cold-calling Martians or puny Victorian Earthlings) and that's it. As a game it does work, though. Your strategies can be knocked-up from a quick scan of the map, and the atmosphere builds as you watch great swathes of territory turning red as the country falls to the Martian advance.

Unfortunately, as soon as you stray from the first map *WOTW* goes horribly wrong. To build or fight you must click on a sector of the main strategic map to move into the battle map. This section conforms to the familiar laws of C&C-type real-time strategy. But the graphics are tragic, betraying a total failure of imagination and dramatic flourish.

The battles themselves deliver little of the nuance or excitement of *Red Alert* or *Total Annihilation*, and your quest for UK domination is knobbed by poor path-finding and a simplistic interface. And these factors slow the game, forcing you to spend more time fiddling with mundane tasks and waiting for screen updates than actually doing battle. ★★

Mark Donald

Or you could try...

Total Annihilation
 GT Interactive ★★★★★
 Tongue-chewingly good real-time strategy.

X-Comm Interceptor
 Microprose ★★★★★
 Intense blend of strategy and space-combat blasting.

↑ Uppers & Downers

Tripod

- Atmospheric
- Novel fusion of strategy and action
- Jeff's electro-grooves...

Gastropod

- ...soon wear thin
- It's a graphical disaster
- And moves at a snail's pace



X Games Pro Boarder

■ Publisher: **EA Sports**
 ■ Developer: **Radical Games**
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-8**
 ■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb RAM, 75Mb HD space, 8x CD-ROM drive** ■ Recommended: **P200, 155Mb HD space, 3D accelerator card** ■ Extras: **supports Force Feedback, modem for Internet play, network and serial link-up**

EA Sports grabs a snowboard and gets trestled to the moose juice, man.

■ While the bright young things who own PlayStation are also the kind of people to appreciate a snowboarding sim, this PC port of the EA game is less assured of a warm reception. Luckily, *X Games Pro Boarder* has a few tricks up its fleecy sleeves to ease the more conservative gamer into the too cool world of snowboarding.

Initially, there are five events to ride in, with eight world-class riders flexing their boards on the stunt-based courses, such as the half-pipe; showing off their straight racing on the Midnight Express; or combining the two on rides like Mt Baker Gap. It's with the stunts, though, that you get a chance to really shine. From basic flips and spins, all the way through to signature moves, such as the Superman Front Flip and Indy McTwist, practice makes it possible to rack up some high scores and pull off spectacular moves. The 3D engine powering *X Games* isn't anything different but, thanks to the way boarders frequently appear in danger of leaving Earth's orbit, the game easily weighs in as one of the most hypnotic sports sims around.

When you win in all five categories, a further five become available. Then you get a final set, including the ultimate arena: the Freeride. Here, a whole mountainscape is modelled, and you can head off in any direction while "bonking" into fallen trees and spinning off ledges.

And, all the while, punchy, crunchy guitar tracks pound along in the background, from a roster of artists that include the mighty Foo Fighters. In fact, the music will appeal long after the fun of pulling all those stunts has palled. Focusing on cool moves rather than competitive races is fine, but it leaves both single and multi-player modes feeling limited. As computer games go, *X Game Pro Boarder* is one hell of a music video. ★★★ **Mark Ramshaw**

APOCALYPSE NOW

WOULD YOU ADAM AND EVE IT? A GARDEN OF EOEN KIT!



■ This being a post-nuclear America, there's plenty of toxic waste and mutant creatures to contend with.

Uppers & Downers

Nuclear

- Epic, yet detailed
- Seriously RPG-ish, yet humorous
- The turn-based combat can be fun

Unclear

- Requires real patience...
- ...and an ability to ignore the presentation

Fallout 2

■ Publisher: **Interplay** ■ Developer: **Black Isle Studios**
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ Requires: **P133, 16Mb RAM, 86Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive** ■ Recommended: **P166**

A post-nuclear journey to discover some fabled gardening kit doesn't sound too promising, and that's before you consider the hard-edged role-playing elements included in this sequel. So why the hell is it so enjoyable?

Fallout 2 is the sort of game your parents warned you about. Unless, that is, one of them looked suspiciously like that little bald fella from the *Dungeons & Dragons* cartoon, and had a mysterious habit of giving you sets of many-sided dice every Christmas. In which case, *Fallout 2* will be right down your hit point-laden, armour class-protected street. Brace yourself; against all the odds (not to mention commercial considerations), this is a role-playing game done the old-fashioned way.

It's not just because the forced isometric perspective and scrappy bitmap graphics are enough to have you remembering why nobody writes games for the Commodore Amiga any more. And it's not even that the character statistic screen contains more numbers than a year of National Lottery results. In fact, the use of traditional methods is evident in just about every aspect of *Fallout 2*. The gameplay revolves around your search for the "Garden of Eden Creation Kit" in a post-apocalyptic landscape, 50 years on from the original

Fallout. Playing as either a good or bad guy, you get to experience a combination of exploration, scripted conversation and battle sequences, which have a bolted-together air about them that you just don't see these days. *Fallout* even has the audacity to switch from real-time to turn-based movement whenever there's an enemy creature nearby.

But if you've tasted the fruits of the original *Fallout*, you'll be familiar with such weirdness, of course. And there are a lot of people out there who gave it a try, for, despite such drawbacks, it inspired real devotion among gamers. And bizarrely, even if you abhor the idea of the original game – where there's no real 3D and no joystick option – chances are you'll fall for its sequel.

It seems that the plethora of role-playing games out there – both board and computer-based – may actually be on to something. That ever-so-simple formula, which involves handing the player some character statistics, then leading them through a story, with plenty of opportunity for combat and accrualment of groovy objects, really does possess a kind of magic after all. Watching those statistics slowly rise as your on-screen alter ego whacks out another bunch of nuclear-flavoured mutants, it's impossible not to feel that warm glow. And because the plot – which has our hero journeying to Las Vegas, San Francisco and other western seaboard haunts – takes its time to unfold, *Fallout 2* manages to conjure up a neatly epic feel that so many modern games lack.

Play *Fallout 2* and you'll understand. Just don't let anybody you see you doing it. The ridicule could be too much to take. ★★★

Mark Ramshaw

Or you could try...

Fallout
 Interplay ★★★★★
 More of the same and almost as good as *Fallout 2*.

Final Fantasy VII
 Eidos Interactive ★★★★★
 Massive, story-led RPG-ing, done the Japanese way.



Scotland Yard

■ Publisher: **Cryo** ■ Developer: **Cryo** ■ Price: **£29.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-6** ■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb RAM, 220Mb HD space (Win 95), 115Mb HD space (Win 98), 8x CD-ROM drive, graphics card**
 ■ Recommended: **28.8kbps modem for Internet play**

Child labour, opium, violins and TB – Victorian London had it all. Take a trip back in time with Cryo's 19th century detective game.

■ Supposedly, *Scotland Yard* is a computer version of the

"classic" board game, but don't worry – we hadn't heard of it either. In this PC outing, criminal genius Mr X is loose in London, and it's the job of the local constabulary to use the available transport to track him down before he blows town.

You begin *Scotland Yard* with a limited number of tickets to travel between the game's 199 locations, and you can travel via taxi, bus and tube. Taxi rides are plentiful, but they'll only take the cop or criminal to a nearby street, whereas bus and tube rides aren't as plentiful, but go further.

If a member of the police turns up at the same location as Mr X he gets nicked but, to make things easier for the old

blighter, he only rarely becomes visible to the Fuzz.

In the multi-player mode *Scotland Yard* is a straight port of the original board game, and all but one of the players takes the role of a dick, in an effort to catch their outnumbered opponent.

The single-player game features a similar mode where you can play as the cops or Mr X, but with additional enhancements such as 3D representations of the locations and a selection of criminals and coppers to play as, not that these add much to the gameplay. The baddies on offer in this section are an odd bunch, ranging from Dracula to HG Wells (apparently he's an evil time traveller. Cuh, you think you know

someone...) and, as you'd expect, each miscreant has their own agenda. Count Zeppelin is (literally) a high-flying spy, whereas Frankenstein's Creature just wants to escape his pursuers.

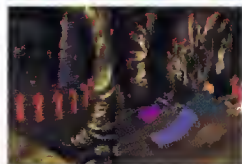
Scotland Yard's heart is in the right place, and it's clear that the design team has tried to make the most of the available brief, but it doesn't come across especially well as a PC game. The original version is tedious beyond belief (plus, ridiculously, you can't play in single-player mode unless you have access to the Internet or a network – cheers), and the enhanced version adds little but the extra visuals to the proceedings.

★★ **Simon Garner**

PC budget re-releases

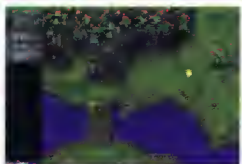
by Robin Alway and Sam Richards

Hark! Is that the sound of cheap winter PC software calling to us from the snow-laden treetops? No, don't be silly – that's a cheeky robin redbreast. The cheap software is over here under this snowdrift, shivering, and waiting for you to welcome it into your home and give it a hot drink.



Broken Sword

■ Publisher: **Sold Out**
 ■ Price: **£4.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ One of the best 2D point-and-click adventure games on the PC. *Broken Sword* blends a modern thriller plot with a mystical story about Templar secrets. You play American tourist and busybody George Stobbard, a visitor to the fair city of Paris. In familiar point-and-click fashion, you must unravel the mystery in which he happens to get himself entangled: he witnesses a clown assassinate an old man, and steal his manuscript. Love interest shimmies on to the scene in the shape of Nico, the female French reporter. Logical, cinematic, complex, and funny by turns, *Broken Sword* is a compliment to any thinking gamer's collection. ★★★★★



Cannon Fodder

■ Publisher: **Sold Out**
 ■ Price: **£4.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ Sensible Software did a brave but brilliant thing with *Cannon Fodder*. The company took a real-time strategy wargame, reduced the scale – so you only control a tiny number of soldiers at a time – and gave it an amusing, cartoon overtone. The resulting title is more reminiscent of the 8-bit arcade favourite *Commando* than the likes of *Command & Conquer*, and although (or perhaps because) it's terribly poor taste, it contrives to be immense fun. Using your mouse to point-and-click your minuscule men around a battlefield strewn with bunkers and crates of grenades is strangely difficult, but endlessly compelling. Looks a little dated now though. ★★★



Jedi Knight

■ Publisher: **Activision Classic Line** ■ Price: **£9.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-16**
 ■ The sequel to *Dark Forces* is more than just Quake in the *Star Wars* universe – there are plenty of skins and patches that enable you to blast stormtroopers in id's classic already. Instead, *Jedi Knight* is a whole 3D Skywalker experience, and a must-play for any serious Empire-fueled fan. The genius lies in the impeccable level design, and the Force powers which you activate through keyboard shortcuts. Use your powers when in danger or to complete puzzles and everybody's happy, but employ them to kill innocent civilians (of which there are many) and you'll be seduced by the *Dark Side*. Truly engrossing. ★★★★★



Power Racing Pack

■ Publisher: **Sierra**
 ■ Price: **£19.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now (in Electronics Boutique)**, ■ General release **March**
 ■ Players: **1-8**
 ■ The drawback with both *NASCAR* and *Indy Car* as sports is that the tracks are boring. Narrow, tight ovals test a driver's endurance, minimise the risk of horrendous crashes and provide a great view for spectators. Sadly, they don't deliver as much of a thrill for the drivers as the meandering roads of a Grand Prix circuit. Included in this pack, both *NASCAR Racing 2* and *IndyCar Racing 2* are super realistic, with *NASCAR* the more attractive and accessible of the two. This pack is a must for racing enthusiasts but, if you're only a casual player, you could find this a chore. ★★★



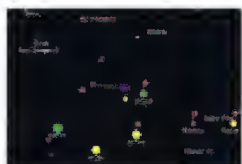
Redline Racer

■ Publisher: **Ubisoft Classique**
 ■ Price: **£12.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-8**
 ■ Magnificently, you can race up to 19 opponents in *Redline Racer* and, even if you don't have a 3D card, it all moves at quite a lick. There are ten tightly-designed tracks, ranging from desert outback and beaches to snowy mountain passes, and eight superbikes to choose from. If you do own an accelerator card you can take advantage of all the extra eye-candy, such as particle smoke and sparks, sun glare and animated weather. And the racing isn't just pure arcade velocity – you need precision control if you're to stay on. Pray that you do, though, because the crash effects are disappointing. A cheat mode enables you to take novelty rides too. ★★★★★



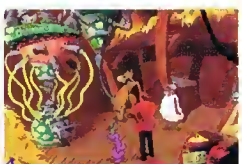
Shadows of the Empire

■ Publisher: **Activision Classic Line** ■ Price: **£9.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ "Star Wars Lite" as it's often affectionately known, is one for the bairns. Packed with *Star Wars* atmosphere and looking slick (providing you have a 3D card), it's designed for ease of play rather than depth. The linear, no-nonsense levels provide a plethora of gameplay styles: there are space combat sections, first-person shooting sections and even a ride on a speeder bike. But almost all of them are either dull or far too easy. Some set-piece moments add entertainment but, apart from the exhilarating opening Hoth battle level, *Shadows* doesn't really keep your joystick wagging. ★★



Stars

■ Publisher: **GT Replay**
 ■ Price: **£5.50** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ *Stars* is bizarre – it's got an odd history – but is also peculiarly popular. Engrossing but long-winded, it began life as a shareware title which rapidly gained fame among the newsgroups. As a result it's become an underground classic, although its ascetic interface, brutal screen displays and complex, turn-based order system don't really lend themselves to mainstream popularity. The setup is a travel-and-trading strategy simulation in which you're encouraged to build your own starships, colonise new worlds and research powerful weapons. Arcade's advice: check out the trial version from <http://beast.webmap.com/stars/demo.htm> before you spend your cash. ★★



Toon Struck

■ Publisher: **Sold Out**
 ■ Price: **£4.99** ■ Release date: **January** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ Most critics loved it, the punters (sadly) didn't buy it – *Toon Struck* represents a courageous attempt to muscle in on LucasArts' territory, and as a game it never quite gained the public acclaim it deserved. Think of *Toon Struck* as an interactive *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, but without the dumb bunny. Live action FMV of Christopher Lloyd meanders its way through a 2D comedy world, where exploding turkeys form the instruments of Count Nefarious's villainy. The child-like animation is shot through with a ruthless streak of adult humour, which borders on the risqué. This is its second outing on budget, so if you abstained the first time round, you've got another chance. ★★★



Virtual Karts

■ Publisher: **Sold Out**
 ■ Price: **£4.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ By far the most ridiculous idea in the world, is the control set-up for *Virtual Karts*. Ostensibly a go-kart sim, this is in fact a monotonous, low-res driving game where you are expected to steer either with one of the few supported steering wheels or with the mouse. Using your keyboard or a joystick are not options. Until you've tried it, you have no idea how hard it is to turn corners at speed using the mouse – the slightest twitch will send your vehicle into the kind of spin Taz is famed for. The race and kart editors mean you can set up your own machine and then race it on different road surfaces in varying weather conditions, but we can't see why you'd want to. ★



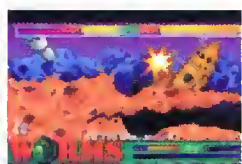
Warcraft

■ Publisher: **Sold Out**
 ■ Price: **£4.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Top-down, real-time, role-playing, resource-management: *Warcraft* is a game of hyphenated adjectives. This is the title that spawned two sequels: the excellent *Warcraft 2* and then, more recently, *Starcraft*. Set in a fantastic past replete with knights, serfs and wizards, the strategy guru Blizzard unleashed a battle game on the public which manages to be both comical and intensely tactical at the same time. It's easy to get to grips with but, given that it has as much depth as a Pacific trench, it keeps on challenging you. Sure, it's been superseded, but at this price you can afford to sate your curiosity and experience some strategy history. ★★★★★



WipEout 2097

■ Publisher: **Psygnosis**
 ■ Price: **£14.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ A console classic that went on to dominate the "future racing" genre on almost all platforms. In *WipEout* you control a turbo-charged hover vehicle. The races are set on high-tech neon-lit tracks, and you have homing missiles to assist your victory efforts. Power-up squares on the circuit give you extra bursts of speed or shields. The race routes are spectacularly designed with huge leaps, winding corridors and knuckle-whitening turns. The original *WipEout* had frighteningly testing levels, but 2097 also boasts an arcade mode for you to practice in. The only problem is that it's been left on the hard shoulder by games such as *DethKarz*. ★★



Worms

■ Publisher: **Sold Out**
 ■ Price: **£4.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-8**
 ■ Despite what many of its console-addicted detractors may say, the PC can rival the PlayStation for those post closing-time "come round my house lads, we can play videogames" moments, and *Worms* is a straightforward lesson in just how. It's turn-based, simple and enormously funny – simply lead your team of invertebrates to victory against those of your mates. You get a variety of weapons and all you have to do is line up your launch angle, hold down for power and lob an assault. The visuals are chunky and functional without being cutting edge, and since the sequels *Worms* spawned are almost identical, for a fiver this original is a must-have. ★★★★★

New Nintendo 64 Games



FRISKY DRIVER TERRORISE THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO

↑ Uppers & Downers

Skittish

- Huge tracks
- Uses lots of imagination
- Simple and unadulterated fun
- Hilarious stunt tracks

Skiddy

- No race catch-up option
- Slightly jerky

San Francisco Rush 2

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive** ■ Developer: **Midway**
■ Price: **TBC** ■ Release date: **TBC** ■ Players: **1-2**

Solid cartoon racing with the emphasis on entertainment.

No one else in the Arcade office seemed to warm much to *San Francisco Rush 2*. Mark – glued to *Ridge Racer 4* – scoffed at its cartoony graphics. Robin – a-wheeling and a-dealing on the phone – scorned at the unrealistic handling of the cars. Sam – used to the delights of *TOCA 2* – said it reminded him of the ancient coin-op *Outrun*. Neil said it made him homesick.

Perhaps it's the nature of today's driving games that have added these great gaming minds. While fun and instantly playable driving games abounded a couple of years ago, these days racing games lean in two very distinct directions. The first category includes the ultra-realistic and graphically heavy strict simulations; games like *Gran Turismo* and *Formula One World Grand Prix*. The second is made up of the more accurate coin-op conversions – arcade-style games like *Ridge Racer* and *Daytona*.

San Francisco Rush 2 falls into the second category, and is a driving game of the instantly playable variety. What make it so good are the tracks, set in places like New York, Seattle and Hawaii, with a fantastic race in Alcatraz. The criss-cross nature of the American roadway system makes for some

superb opportunities to skid round right-angled corners, over grass and gratings, through tunnels and over flyovers.

The routes are not set, with each track featuring plenty of alternative tracks, interesting little short-cuts and great opportunities to get lost. You can drive down some steps into the New York subway, for example, and scoot along the tracks until you crash into a train, or take a tunnel through the depths of the prison island. There aren't many driving games that are as fun on practice mode as they are in races proper, but there's so much to explore in *Rush 2*.

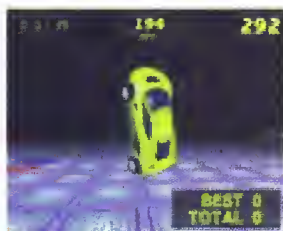
SET IN PLACES LIKE NEW YORK, SEATTLE, HAWAII AND ALCATRAZ

that you'll often find yourself reversing around corners and double-backing on yourself to see if you've missed anything, forgetting completely about your lap times. The choice of cars is great too. You get 15 vehicles, and you can customise each of them – right down to adjusting their brakes and durability. Choose your vehicle from sports cars, 4 x 4s and our particular favourite – the VW Camper Van.

San Francisco Rush 2 is clean, wholesome fun. It does have some problems – there's no catch up, which'll most likely prevent you from ever reaching pole position, but settle down with a second player for some split-screen action, and the hours will fly by. ★★★★★

Rich Pelley

■ Look out for loads of cars and arcade-style spills.



Or you could try...

Cruisin' USA
Nintendo ★
Similar to, but with cardboard scenery and music to make your ears bleed.

San Francisco Rush
GT Interactive ★★
The original, which was fun but not quite so lovingly executed.

OVER THE TOP



■ Get used to the open road. The computer-controlled opposition race so far ahead you'll soon be all alone.

N64'S FIRST HI-RES RACER REVS UP

Top Gear Overdrive

■ Publisher: **THE** ■ Developer: **Snowblind**
 ■ Price: **£44.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Extras: **steering wheel, Expansion Pak**

Developer Snowblind takes Top Gear Rally from previous owner Boss, piles on the eye candy and create a curious hybrid...

Turok 2 has been beaten. Though not in the fields of ludicrously entertaining weaponry, or huge scaly beasts or even in firing a missile that burrows into people's brains. No, it's been beaten to the first use of Nintendo's new Expansion Pak. Trumpeted as the first game ever to employ the memory-expanding box o' joy – and thus turning the N64 into a machine capable of producing graphics similar to those you'd expect from a high-spec 3Dfx-equipped PC – *Turok 2*'s constantly slipping release date enabled *Top Gear Overdrive* to skid into the shops a full two weeks before Acclaim's effort. It came seemingly out of nowhere and looks absolutely gorgeous.

And why? We don't know. There's no mention in the instruction booklet of a high-resolution option, but, by golly, slip in the Expansion Pak, go to Options and – hey presto! *Overdrive* paints the eyeballs with gloriously metallic cars, majestically sweeping backdrops and absolutely no fogging or pop-up. It's quite a sight to see.

It's a shame, then, that *Top Gear Overdrive*'s tyre-squealing gameplay doesn't quite live up to the standards set by the superb presentation. Ostensibly a semi-sequel to Boss Studio's *Top Gear Rally*, *Overdrive* slips quite neatly into the space between stools marked "simulation" and "arcade". *Top Gear Rally* was memorable for its wonderfully spot-on handling, catering for mud-slinging powerslides and cross-country ramshackle racing with style and aplomb, utilising the analogue stick perfectly. The pedestrian opposition and bare tracks let it down, but – in the main – it was great.

Top Gear Overdrive tries hard to add to its predecessor and, for the most part, succeeds. That said, it's probably the most difficult game you'll have played in a long while. It's not that the opposition are damn good – although they are – it's that the majority of them start half a lap ahead of you and only a classically driven lap, adhering perfectly to the



■ The one thing you'll never have to watch out for is fog – the beautiful scenery stretches right to the horizon. But it's probably best to keep your eyes on the road.

racetrack line, will see you succeed. Additionally, you'll have to memorise each of the six courses' four-or-so shortcuts and use them ruthlessly every race. It's enough to make you rip your hair out. But – crucially – even though you'll often switch off your N64 in anger, these flaws don't make you want to quit for good.

To liven up the action, power-up-style nitros, cash-related car improvements and *San Francisco Rush*-style jumps have been added. While these first two features work well, the gravity-defying jumps are ludicrously unfair. They invariably appear on a corner and throw you into a wall or over the side of the track, with explosive results that waste valuable seconds. This is an ill-judged and unnecessary concession to arcade thrills and spills. *Overdrive*'s simplified handling irks, too, removing much of *Rally*'s subtlety, with only the smashingly useful handbrake turn distinguishing it.

Ultimately, though, *Top Gear Overdrive* tries hard and proves – eventually, and once you've got used to its flaws – to be highly rewarding fun. Even if male-pattern baldness inductingly so. ★★★

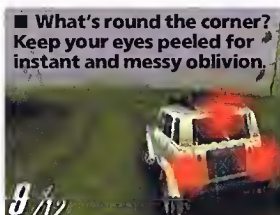
Jes Bickham

OVERDRIVE PAINTS THE EYEBALLS WITH GLORIOUSLY METALLIC CARS

↑ Uppers & Downers

Speedy
 ■ Looks utterly astounding
 ■ A mighty racing challenge
 ■ Well-designed tracks

Weedy
 ■ Just a little bit too hard
 ■ Tolerance-destroying jumps and crashes
 ■ Handling could be better



■ What's round the corner? Keep your eyes peeled for instant and messy oblivion.

Or you could try...

Top Gear Rally
 Nintendo *****
 Still a cracking good ride, with some of the best car control ever seen.

San Francisco Rush 2
 GT Interactive *****
 Lighthearted fun, featuring ludicrous stunts. See left for a full review.



Penny Racers

■ Publisher: **THQ** ■ Developer: **Takara** ■ Price: **£39.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-4**

Teensy car racing powered by clockwork. The Japanese love it, but how will it fare in the Turismo-devoted UK?

■ Appropriately, for a game based on clockwork toy cars, the most remarkable thing about *Penny Racers* is its complete lack of speed. You don't so much wheel-spin off the starting line as pull away carefully, like a trilby-wearing pensioner with a boot full of nitroglycerine bottles.

Continents drift quicker than the vehicles accelerate in *Penny Racers* (the latest in a long line of inexplicably-big-in-Japan *Choro Q* clockwork car games). Travel half a lap after the not-exactly-turbo-assisted start and you'll still be pulling faces and rocking back and forth in your chair, trying to coax your tiny clockwork motor into something approaching top speed.

And when you do finally start moving at a decent pace, some of the worst computer cheating seen since *Mario Kart*'s Princess Daisy home-straight comebacks puts a stop to any prolonged sense of velocity. Run over a mine or take a missile for your troubles and the prospect of a crawl back into the top half of your speedo is enough to have you lunging for the reset.

Persevere and things do pick up slightly. You can upgrade your car with new parts and bolt on weapons, and the heavy handling is actually quite fun to get to grips with. As well as sliding round the corners you can barrel roll over for really tight turns. There's loads of different vehicles – ranging from Minis to dustbin lorries – and you can design your own courses; something that would be a great feature if only the actual racing had more to recommend it.

Basically, as much as you may chuckle at *Penny Racer*'s comedy horn noise, the fact remains that with classics like *Mario Kart* out there, *Penny Racer*'s all round lack of dazzle and speed is only ever going to leave you wound up like a clockwork car. ★ **Robin Alway**



■ Cut straight through the technique and into the carnage – it's easy with *Blitz*'s help screens.

Uppers & Downers

First down

- Suitably violent
- Speedy action
- Easy to play

First aid

- Limited one-player mode
- Poor AI
- A bit too easy to play

PRIME TIME CUT TO THE HIGHLIGHTS

NFL Blitz

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive**
 ■ Developer: **Midway** ■ Price: **£45**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Extras: **Rumble pak, controller pak**

Like American football? Hate the idea of spending two hours just to get one game out of the way? Introducing NFL Blitz – NBA Jam with shoulder pads. Medic!

American football in all its stat-heavy, slow-paced, stop-start glory doesn't appeal to many people on this side of the Atlantic. Quite why this should be is unclear, as millions of us watch some of the most sedentary sports imaginable – like cricket and snooker – but "gridiron" has never really caught on. Which is a shame, because underneath all the commercialism and hype there's an explosively brutal spectacle just waiting to break out and crack some heads.

NFL Blitz dispenses with the rulebook and cracks heads by the dozen. It's an arcade conversion – a very good one at that – and, as you'd expect from a game whose original purpose was to tempt punters to part with their small change, it's the most simple and accessible version of the sport around.

The teams are reduced to seven-a-side and your progress towards the endzone must be made 30 yards at a time, instead of the usual

ten. Consequently, almost every play consists of a huge pass, a thundering run and a crunching tackle at the end. As soon as the ball has been grounded there's the briefest of interludes – the Play Select screen pops up for no more than ten seconds – before you're thrown right back into the action and the players continue to perpetrate unspeakable acts of violence. The three-button control system means that there are no complicated moves to learn. In fact the game displays Help screens at regular intervals to tell you what the buttons do and to reveal the occasional secret move.

It's similar to the *Wayne Gretzky Hockey* games and the *NBA Jam* series – plenty of quick thrills, with the promise of lashings of gratuitous violence and a guaranteed high score at the end of it all. *NFL Blitz* emulates the arcade machine almost perfectly, including all the little touches, such as the timer on the Option screens and the password-protected player records. It even features an option to design your own plays, then save them on a Controller Pak and download them into an *NFL Blitz* '99 arcade machine.

NFL Blitz doesn't offer long-term one-player challenge, as it's easy to win if you concentrate. However, get a few mates round and it has an excellent multi-player tournament. An essential purchase if you like your games in 20-minute post-pub slices. ★★★★★

Martin Kitts



■ Make a touchdown and head straight back into the *Blitz* action.



Or you could try...

NFL Quarterback Club '99
 Acclaim ★★★★★
 A more realistic and simulation-based rendition of American football, perhaps best suited for those who are more familiar with the sport.

NOT MUCH COPTER

A HOVER THAT'S DECIDEDLY TOO MUCH BOVVER

Knife Edge

■ Publisher: **Microware** ■ Developer: **Kemco**
 ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release Date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4**
 ■ Extras: **Rumble Pak, on-cart backup**

Shigeru Miyamoto's design genius (see page 66) is fully evident in *Lylat Wars* which serves as a lesson in how to turn a simple on-rails shoot-'em-up into an epic cinematic experience. Sadly, Kemco has been playing truant from Mr Miyamoto's classes.

Knife Edge looks just like a lightgun game and feels just like a lightgun game. The only problem is that it isn't a lightgun game. Which kind of leaves it floundering. You take the role of the nose-gunner in a jet fighter, shooting at aliens, while the N64 itself takes care of the infinitely more exciting job of piloting the hideous thing (next time you pop into your friendly neighbourhood game store, have a look at the delightful artwork on the *Knife Edge* box and you'll see exactly what we mean). It's like being at the world's best party, with pop stars and royalty and more booze than you could even think of drinking – and yet you're not allowed to leave the kitchen.

All the "action" takes place under a little cursor that you steer around the screen – position it over an alien, and then just pull the trigger to dispose of said extra-terrestrial. Once you've shot down all the little green men in their little green flying machines, you take care of the obligatory boss monster and proceed to the next level, which is just more and more of the same.

Knife Edge is about as taxing as the kind of mental agility tests anthropologists try out on farmyard animals. Occasionally you are called upon to make a simple decision about which route you should take, though you'd be hard pressed to tell the difference between them.

If you really want to inflict this tedium on your friends, up to four people can play at once, controlling separate cursors. The only potential amusement to be had with the multi-player game is if a fist fight breaks out because someone has encroached on someone else's bit of the screen. The occurrence of such a brawl is highly unlikely though, because after the first five minutes of play you'll have either succumbed to peer pressure and plugged in *GoldenEye* instead, or you'll be phoning for an ambulance because your best mate has just swallowed his tongue.

The saddest part of the whole thing is the fact that *Knife Edge* might have been a half-decent game, if only it had been bundled with a lightgun. ★

Martin Kitts

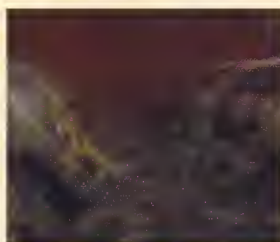
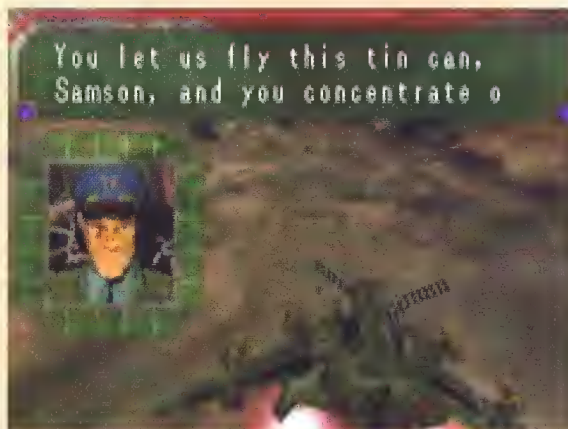
↑ Uppers & Downers

Scalpel

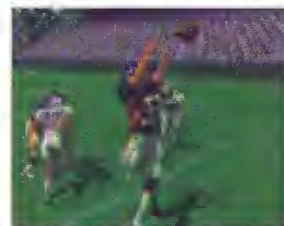
- Large bosses
- Four-player mode
- Erm...

Butter knife

- On rails gameplay
- Boring graphics
- Dull, dull, dull, dull, dull, dull, dull. Get the message?



■ Some of *Knife Edge's* bosses may look all right, but with the whole game played on rails don't expect much in the way of variety.



NFL Quarterback Club '99

■ Publisher: **Acclaim**
 ■ Developer: **Iguana**
 ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4**
 ■ Extras: **Expansion Pak, Rumble Pak, Controller Pak**

Serious American Football doesn't get much more realistic than this. Acclaim pumps its new edition full of creatine and comes up with a Super Bowl of a sim.

■ Over Christmas 1997 *NFL Quarterback Club '98* cleaned up in the sales charts, thanks to its official Brett Favre and NFL licence and its hi-res graphics. Since then, developer Iguana has proved it knows more about using the hi-res modes than anyone, and new games such as *WWF Warzone* and *Turok 2* have tested the limits. With this pedigree you'd expect a visual leap from *Quarterback '98* to '99, and that's exactly what Iguana has delivered.

The game is so detailed that the only way to see everything is to zoom right in and use the slow motion replay. You'll notice the replay screens around the stadiums, the referee running to get a view of the action, the open receivers waving frantically, and the little dummies, fakes and shimmies all the players make. The ball even has "Wilson" written over the stitching. The degree of detail is incredible.

Fortunately, it plays much better than its predecessor, too. Tackles can be broken, and you can drag defenders behind you to get those last few inches. The passing game is still tricky, as the placement of the ball has to be perfect, but you'll spend weeks playing the game to finish a season so you'll get plenty of practice in along the way.

Frame rate suffers when you view the entire pitch, but that isn't likely to put off too many players, particularly once they see the Replay mode. Again, it's not for beginners, but for those who know and love their gridiron *Quarterback Club '99* is the last word in American football sims.

★★★★

Martin Kitts

Or you could try...

Lylat Wars
 Nintendo ★★★★★
 Finely tuned blasting from Shigeru with the biggest explosions in videogames.

Forsaken
 Acclaim Entertainment ★★★★★
 Sumptuous looking Descent-style blasting with lightning effects to die for.



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New Dreamcast Games



■ Sarah Bryant kicks ass. Then Jeffry kicks hers.

THIRD TIME LUCKY

DREAMCAST'S SHOWCASE GAME HAS COME TO KICK ASS

Virtua Fighter 3tb

■ There's no disguising VF3tb's coin-op roots.

■ Publisher: Sega of Japan ■ Developer: Sega AM2/Genki ■ Price: £59.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1-2 ■ Extras: Sega's Arcade Stick

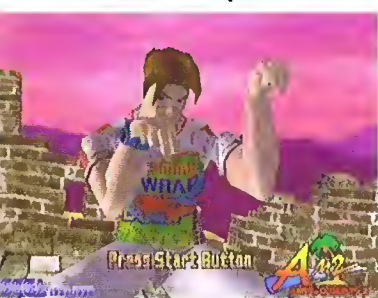
The most complex and faithful console fighter in the world returns to grace the Dreamcast. So how do the muscle-bound protagonists shape up?

To the rest of the world, *Virtua Fighter* is just another – albeit top quality – series of fighting games. To Japanese gamers, it's much more than that. It's practically a religion. It's been three years since the release of the first *Virtua Fighter 3* coin-op, but walk into any arcade in Tokyo and you'll still find

banks of machines occupied. Few videogames have ever enjoyed this kind of staying power, especially in the ultra competitive, cut-throat world of arcade fighting games. Don't underestimate how important *Virtua Fighter* is on its home turf.

The reason for this level of fanaticism is its amazing level of depth. The more you play it, the more you realise how much there is to learn. Many veteran players argue that mastering *Virtua Fighter* is impossible – there's simply too much to take in. Certainly you might spend a year playing before mastering a single character (there are 12 in total), and in Japan – where games are taken very seriously – this degree of sophistication commands immense respect.

On the surface VF3tb (the "tb" stands for Team Battle) is deceptively simple. There are only four buttons: kick, punch, guard and side-step. And sure, beginners can play at an elementary level and simply enjoy thrashing away at





each other. They may even conclude that, as with most fighting games, victory is often determined by an equivalent of "scissors, paper, stone" (if you kick, say, when someone else punches, then you'll probably get the hit in, but if you kick and your opponent side-steps, he'll get the next shot in, and so on).

But don't be fooled. Spend a little time and you'll realise that combination button presses in conjunction with joystick movements access literally hundreds of moves. It takes a good while just to work out how to access a character's full set – and then you're presented with *Virtua Fighter's* real challenge; learning how to use those moves effectively.

And this is where the game's genius really shines through. Once you've seen a glimpse of how much game there is here, it takes a tremendous amount of effort to reach the next plateau of really understanding it all. There are so many tactics, strategies and nuances that at first it's easy to feel like you're in over your head. Stick at it, though, and you won't find a better fighting game.

IT'S A CLASSIC FIGHTING GAME THAT DESERVES TO BE RANKED ALONGSIDE THE BEST EVER

While this depth is undoubtedly *Virtua Fighter's* strength, it's also what has put some players off the series in the past. Whereas you can pick up *Tekken* or *Street Fighter* and get competent with the game relatively quickly, getting good at *Virtua Fighter* takes a massive investment of time and effort. Hopefully, Dreamcast's success will encourage more people to make this commitment.

So how does the Dreamcast *Virtua Fighter* stack up?

Essentially, it's all here. All the characters, moves and locations have been faithfully ported from arcade to home system. It looks great, too. When *Virtua Fighter 3* first hit the arcades, utilising the industry-leading Model 3 board, it was the best-looking game the world had ever seen. Three years later, it's still at the top, rivalled only by Sega's other Model 3 racers. It's a testament to the Dreamcast's power that such a faithful conversion has been possible. It isn't quite arcade-perfect, though. Tiny details are missing from the backgrounds. There's occasional polygon clipping and the shadows sometimes break up when you're in the air. On the floating pontoon level, for example, it's sometimes possible to continue fighting long after your character is effectively walking on water. Still, this is nit-picking, and the game is more than close enough for Sega to be proud – especially when you consider that it's one of the first four titles for the new system, and wasn't even completed with the help of a full development kit.

If you can fault Sega for anything, it's that not much extra has been added for home play. A great coin-op



doesn't automatically make a great home game – they're designed for two different play experiences: one for a short and sweet two-minute thrill, the other for a more long-term fix. On-line and pocket-sized VMS features would've been a natural for Dreamcast's flagship title, but they're nowhere to be seen. You're awarded points for how efficiently you race through the one-player mode, which gives you something to aim for, and there's also the three-on-three Team Battle from the second edition of the coin-op, but this doesn't add significantly to the game's replay value – you simply have to pick three characters to fight with in turn, instead of just one. And, like with most fighting games, you can race through the one-player mode right out of the box, by simply mashing buttons. If you intend getting value for money from *VF3tb*, then it'll be from the two-player mode.

One last thing. Many of the moves require button combinations that are near-impossible on the Dreamcast pad layout. This means you'll either have to re-learn how to hold your controller or invest in Sega's Arcade Stick. This is designed in the mould of the one used with the *VF3tb* coin-op and works wonderfully.

Despite these blemishes *Virtua Fighter 3tb* is a huge success for Sega. It's a classic fighting game that deserves to be ranked alongside the best ever. The game still wildly succeeds as both a top-notch fighter and an awesome showpiece for Sega's new machine. If you've mucked around with fighting games in the past and want to move on, this is where it gets serious. ★★★★★ **Chris Slate**

↑ Uppers & Downers

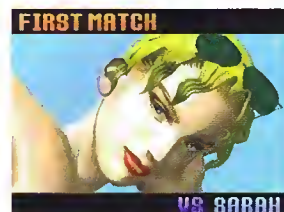
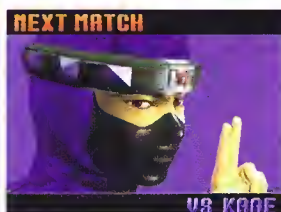
Number threes

- Great conversion of classic coin-op
- 12 characters and hundreds of moves
- Unrivalled depth and challenge

Number twos

- Not quite arcade perfect
- One-player game too short
- You'll need a committed friend to fight with

■ Many people compare *VF3tb* to *Tekken*, but make no mistake – Sega's characters vary far more in terms of fighting style, and offer considerably more depth.





■ While the racing of flowery pink hippos along ice floes is outlawed in most countries, in Japan it appears to be perfectly legal.



IMPORT

BELLY LAUGHS

LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW

Pen Pen Trilcelon

■ Publisher: Sega ■ Developer: General Entertainment
■ Price: £59.99 ■ Release date: on sale now (import)
■ Players: 1-4

Dreamcast's best original launch game involves guiding a selection of flipper-equipped animals through a multi-disciplined ice race course. It may not be the game to save Sega, but it will certainly provide a few good laughs.

↑ Uppers & Downers

Flappers

■ Mrs Cream, Sparky the Blue Penguin, and evil flying books. Yes, it's mad
■ Looks good enough to eat
■ Surprisingly engaging races

Crappers

■ The novelty does wear off after a while
■ Lacks the real gameplay pedigree of Mario Kart



■ It's Sparky the blue penguin thing. He can swim, he can flap, he can waddle, and he can bounce around on oversized jellies. Marvellous.

main job is to press the button rhythmically in order to build up a steady flipper action. Unlike *Mario Kart* there are no weapon power-ups, but you can barge opponents off steps or into lakes.

Pen Pen Trilcelon looks great. The depth and solidity of the rendered landscape and characters are fabulous, with none of the pernicious pop-up, polygon break-up or fogging that you can see in existing console titles. It's almost as if the developer became so excited about the possibilities provided by a new colour palette, that it became a challenge to make use of every shade on offer.

The nature of the game makes it difficult to discuss *Pen Pen* in sensible terms, though, and the addictive gameplay sneaks up on you unexpectedly from beneath a blanket of pure comedy. Among the playable characters are Jaw the menacing purple shark, Ballery the portly pink hippo or

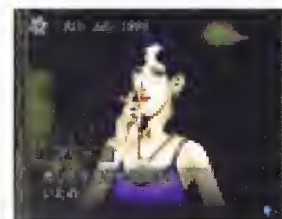
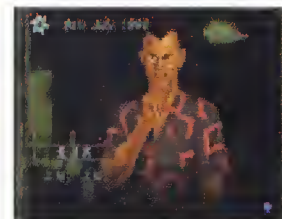
THE MUSIC IS PLAYED BY THE THE FASTEST BRASS BAND ON EARTH

Sneak the orangey thing who swims upside down. No, we don't know what Sneak is, but one of the loading screens depicts him grinning feverishly next to a row of postboxes; a scene captioned with the touching phrase "Sneak is easily exalted". Leading a particular character to victory rewards you with an item, such as flippers or skis, which you can use to your advantage in future races. Although what help a red top hat might be has yet to be revealed.

It's highly probable that *Pen Pen Trilcelon* may never be officially released in the UK, since publishers over here tend to unfairly dismiss this kind of thing as Japanese nonsense. It's also worth noting that this kind of off-the-wall game often accompanies a new console's launch, and – given the scarcity of alternative titles and a natural desire to want the best for a new system – is often awarded praise that, a few months down the line, seems inappropriate. Will future Dreamcast releases diminish *Pen Pen's* appeal? Maybe. But for now we like it and if an import machine has made depressing reading of your bank statement, this is the light relief you need. ★★ ★

Sam Richards

■ You get the choice to play as two men-in-a-rubber-suit Godzillas. Completing the game gives access to more.



July

■ Publisher: **Sega of Japan**
 ■ Developer: **Sega** ■ Price: **£59.99 (import price)**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now (Japan)** ■ Players: **1**

Indecipherable, comic-style adventure game.

■ The 7th of July 1999 is, as far as we can work out, the day that Nostradamus predicted the world we know will end and a new world will begin. Bad luck, then, if your birthday falls on the 8th – you should probably think about having your party the weekend before. But what on Earth any of this has to do with *July* the game, we've absolutely no idea. It's Dreamcast's text-based adventure game and sadly we don't even know enough Japanese to reply "a little" when someone asks us "Do you speak Japanese?" in, obviously, Japanese.

This language barrier therefore renders the whole game entirely unplayable. Or, at least, it would if we could actually find any game as such to play. But we couldn't. There's no animation, so the entire game is spent conversing with odd manga-looking people (and, at one point, a cat). The conversations are very one-sided – only a couple of times do you get to choose a reply – not, of course, that you have the faintest idea what you are saying. The challenge must somehow come from choosing which location to visit – every so often you're brought back to a map which you can move around on. But for the most part, you'll be staring blankly at the screen, repeatedly pressing A and wondering exactly What The Hell's Going On.

When it came to writing this review, there was a bit of debate in the Arcade office about what score to give *July*. It's not fair to punish a game just because you don't understand it, argued one side. If you can't play it then it's no fun and should be marked accordingly, said the others. Our conclusion? As a deterrent to your accidentally buying the thing, we'll rate it rock-bottom then review it again if it ever turns up in English. Now, how do you get this thing to do half a star? ★ **Rich Pelley**

IT'S A MONSTER

FIFTY STORIES HIGH AND FULL OF RAGE

Godzilla

■ Publisher: **Sega of Japan** ■ Developer: **Sega** ■ Price: **£59.99 (import price)**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now (Japan)**
 ■ Players: **1**

Japan's favourite over-grown lizard, dusted down and doing what he likes best – going to town and causing destruction on a devastating scale.

It's always difficult for an actor to escape typecasting, with smart, chiselled English gents destined to play The Bad Guy for as long as they live and rubber-faced jesters pulling faces through predictable slapstick comedies. It's perhaps a problem that has troubled Godzilla over the decades. While he's unlikely to turn up as the lead in a summer romantic comedy or win the role of the next Bond, you can't help wondering how happy he is with his agent. After all, he only ever lands parts that involve wandering around Japan or New York smashing the place up, with only a Chewit tie-in for variety. Then again, apart from a few *Jurassic Park* rejects, you can't imagine anyone else joining the audition queue.

And walking around various cities in Japan smashing the place up is exactly what you do in *Godzilla* the game. To cut to the chase, it's one of the most tedious games in the history of videogaming. It's obvious what has been going on in the minds of the development team; they wanted a big-name game that looked fantastic. It had to ship with the first Dreamcasts, look good in screenshot-based

previews, fuel rumour and generate interest in a machine whose very existence is – to be honest – just as much "touch" as it is "go".

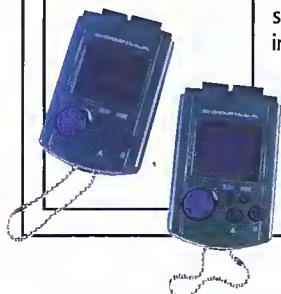
The game does look superb. Godzilla is huge, and trawls around Japan sending tower blocks flying with a flick of the tail, charging through stadiums and squishing millions of pounds worth of military hardware underfoot. We could go on, or we could just print some pictures. See the screenshots at the top of this page? Imagine them, only moving.

The problems lie with the gameplay or, to be more exact, the almost total lack of it. The levels are set around Japan. To progress from one to the next, you have to destroy all the pink blobs on the map. These are tanks that, along with the odd helicopter and UFO, are the only things that can kill you. You can walk over and stamp on the tanks within minutes of starting each level, and finish the game within an afternoon if you so desire, probably in time for *Neighbours*. The only challenge is avoiding the military's fire which, if it wasn't for the camera angles constantly obscuring your view, would be a doddle. You'll then spend the rest of the level padding the time out, smashing your way around the cities and reducing skyscrapers to rubble. To begin with this is quite good fun, but after about five minutes it becomes as dull as the dishwasher in a student house (and equally unappetising).

Many enthusiastic faces appeared in the Arcade office when our Dreamcast arrived, eager to see what the orange-swirled one had to offer. Not one of these people lasted more than five minutes on *Godzilla* without wanting to turn it off. Our guess is that the experience will be the same for you. ★ **Rich Pelley**

Porta-God

■ The *Godzilla VMS* game was released before the Dreamcast in Japan. It plays as a virtual pet, where you breed a small dinosaur and build up his powers by playing a little firing game. The VMS can then be plugged into another VMS (where the two little monsters will quite harrowingly battle to the death) or plugged into the Dreamcast where your pet is transformed into fully 3D monster to battle against other small baddies and Godzilla himself.





IMPORT



SONIC BOOM

HEEDGEHOGGING THE LIMELIGHT

Sonic Adventure

■ Publisher: **Sega of Japan** ■ Developer: **Sonic Team**
 ■ Price: **£59.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now (Japan)**
 ■ Players: **1** ■ Extras: **VMS**

It's the game we've all been waiting for. Sonic returns in a make-or-break game for Dreamcast. Has the spiky speed merchant still got the legs?

From the Sega Master System to the Saturn, Sonic has remained Sega's flagship character and mascot. As such, he's one of a very few widely recognisable videogame icons. Let's face it, even your Granny could point out Sonic in an identity parade if he nicked her handbag. With power, however, comes responsibility. And all Sega's hopes are pinned on Sonic doing for Dreamcast what Mario did for Nintendo 64.

So is *Sonic Adventure* any good? The game is essentially two games in one: there's the "Sonic" bit, and then there's the "adventure" bit. They are two distinct parts, so we'll look at each separately.

The Sonic element is very much arcade-style *Sonic the Hedgehog* as you'll remember it. You still collect rings (and the Dreamcast still goes "ping" each time you do). Baddies are killed by jumping on their heads. If you get it wrong, Sonic takes a hit and his rings scatter in all directions. There are power-ups hidden inside little TV sets. Sonic can still bunch into a ball for extra speed. If you've ever played a *Sonic* game before, you'll know exactly what to do.

Except, of course, that it's all in glorious 3D. And, thankfully, it looks great – a lot better than N64's *Super Mario 64* and considerably better than the other Dreamcast games we've seen so far. *Sonic* games have always been about speed, and so a large part of the game is spent legging it as fast as possible "into" the screen. The game world flashes by at lightning pace, offering a hint at just the sort of power that lies under Dreamcast's white bonnet.

You can stop and look around – and you're not hemmed



■ Feeling Supersonic? Graphically, *Sonic Adventure* looks fantastic, with a 3D world more complex and moving faster than Nintendo's *Super Mario 64*.





■ **Talking Japanese.** This Japanese version of *Sonic* suffers the same fate as the Japanese *Metal Gear Solid*, where the high proportion of Japanese text adds an extra layer of difficulty to the non-Japanese audience.

↑ Uppers & Downers

Sonic
 ■ Great graphics
 ■ Tried 'n' trusted *Sonic* gameplay
 ■ Two games for the price of one

Chronic
 ■ The adventure is all in Japanese
 ■ You're not always in control

in to a particular track at all. You can explore off of the beaten path, scout out your own shortcuts and search for hidden goodies. The camera rotates with the trigger buttons, and you can look around with the D-pad. But it's hurtling along at maximum revs that makes *Sonic Adventure* so much fun to play, and so you'll often find yourself whizzing happily past interesting diversions, just because you don't want to slow down.

There's just so much to see. Mouths will drop when you get to the end of the first level, run along a collapsing bridge and the camera swings around to reveal the chase of the sharks sending the boardwalk flying. A huge whirlwind encapsulates the next level, and the graphical effect is amazing as you are picked up from the end of one platform and dumped on a higher one. Make no mistake, *Sonic Adventure* is performing graphical trickery at a level never seen before on a home console.

There are a couple of problems. At times the camera doesn't quite manage to keep up with the action. You get the feeling that the lag is a little stage managed ("hey, this game's so fast even the camera can't keep up!") but it's also off putting. And in conjunction with the wobbly analogue controller, keeping Sonic on the straight and narrow is sometimes harder than it should be. The other problem, as with all *Sonic* games, is that occasionally you feel a little like a passenger on a rollercoaster. It's all very well pinging off red bumpers here and loop-the-looping there, but a lot of these moments are set-pieces. You're just along for the ride.

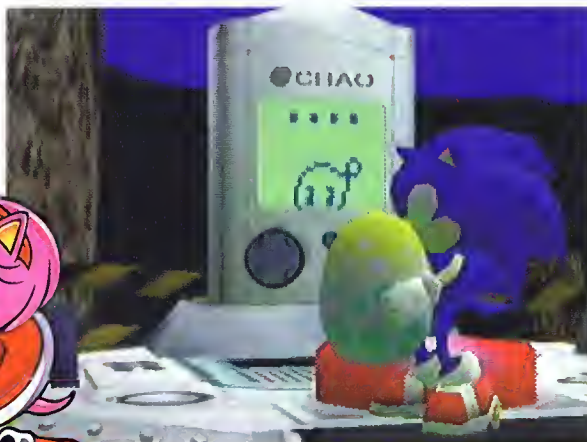
But let's move on to the "Adventure" element. Between the action levels you find yourself in a small, bustling holiday town. It's fun to explore, if only to take in the sights and check out the graphics. Cars stop and let you cross, water ripples as you

jump into the swimming pool, Sonic leaves little trainer marks on the sand. You also use this town as access to the action levels. You can go back to whichever levels you like as Sonic or as the other characters (Tails, Knuckles, Amy and all) once you've rescued them from elsewhere in the game. Entry to a new level opens up when you finish a prior one.

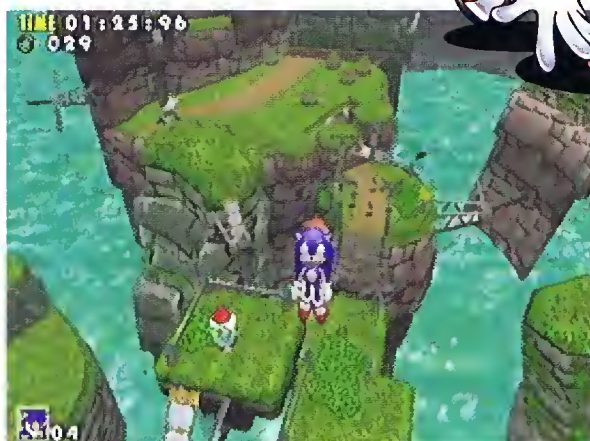
But you're really meant to be talking to people. And, considering that 90% of the communication takes place in Japanese text, this is quite tricky. It's not a problem that renders the game unplayable, more of one that requires a degree of trial and error. Obviously, when the game is released in the UK this will all be in English.

So what do we think of it all? *Sonic Adventure* looks great and is a lot of fun to play. It's a bit like going to Alton Towers. The arcade sections are short and fantastic, it's just that you have to queue up for up to an hour on the adventure levels to get to each one. ★★★★★ **Rich Pelley**

MOUTHS WILL DROP WHEN YOU GET TO THE END OF THE FIRST LEVEL. THERE'S JUST SO MUCH TO SEE.



■ As with *Godzilla*, the Dreamcast's VMS plays an integral role in *Sonic Adventure*. To breed your LCD creature, you have to find an egg in the main game and take it to a special machine (as shown on the left). A new life will be born, and you can set him to play in his own little playground with all the other little animals you've rescued in a special sub-game.



■ To the left: the fantastic roller-coaster section of *Windy Valley*, the fastest thing you'll have ever played on a videogames console.

FEEL THE FORCE IT'S TIME TO FACE VADER. AGAIN



■ Once again, the Rebellion's hopes rest on you.

COIN-OP

Star Wars Trilogy Arcade

■ Maker: **Sega** ■ Developer: **Sega Am12**
■ Release date: **out now** ■ Players: **1**

It's taken a long time for Sega to follow up Star Wars, but it's well worth the wait. And it's coming from a galaxy, far, far away very soon.

After *Star Wars* hit the silver screen in the late '70s, the world was never quite the same again. To this day, adults and kids alike utter the phrase "Use the Force, Luke" whenever it seems appropriate (for instance, when trying to sink that tenth pint). It also inspired one of the most fondly-remembered coin-op games of all time: Atari's

Star Wars, a vector graphics-based simulation of the attack on the Death Star. It was an instant classic. TIE-fighters screeched towards you. When you died, the voice of Obi-Wan Kenobi reassured you that "The force will be with you, always." Best of all, you could "use the force" in the trench sections (by not firing any weapons up until the very last minute) and if you succeeded in this mini-quest you were awarded a special "force" bonus.

It was great. But now it's up to Sega to continue the *Star Wars* legacy in the arcade. It tried once before, a few years back (and a conversion of the game became one of 32X's lacklustre line-up), but now Sega's really going for it. *Star Wars Trilogy Arcade* features three stages: the attack on the Death Star; the battle against the Walkers on Hoth; and a race through the forests of Endor on speeder bikes.

Each standard level is your standard shoot-

'em-up fare. The vehicles travel on rails (but there's so much going on, you hardly notice), while you target your guns' crosshairs around the screen. The other control is an innovative "help" button – you can activate this at certain points during the game to, well, bring in some extra help when it's all getting a bit too much.

Interspersed between these (very deep) levels are two special stages in which you, as Luke Skywalker, take on first Boba Fett and then Darth Vader armed with a light sabre. If you're lucky enough to get this far, you then have the joys of a final level attacking the second Death Star above Endor. Don't expect to take on this challenge first time round though – we spent £20 getting there. But it was worth it.

Star Wars Trilogy Arcade is great, and if it doesn't get you battering your mates with old tinfoil tubes, nothing will. ★★ ★ **Cam Anderson**

BEAT GOES ON COOL MIX-MASTER CUT FASTER

COIN-OP

Beatmania

■ Maker: **Konami** ■ Developer: **Konami**
■ Release date: **out now** ■ Players: **2**

Live out your DJ fantasies with Japan's current coin-op craze – Boy George eat your heart out.

"Yeah man, it was wicked! There was these banging choons, and I looked up, right, and it were Sasha on the decks, wunnit!" With the spread of club culture and its increasing crossover into the videogame market, it's highly likely that this kind of incisive commentary isn't completely alien to you. Konami has coupled this love of the dance scene with a passion for coin-ops and produced the awesome *Beatmania*.

Currently in its *3rd Mix* edition (it's been something of a phenomenon in Japan for over a year), *Beatmania* puts you in the sneakers of a DJ, competing against the machine to stick to the beat of some increasingly complex tracks. In essence, it's a very similar concept to *Simon* – very easy to learn and a yet still a difficult game to master.

The control system features five keys and a turntable that you must hit or scratch at certain points of the track,

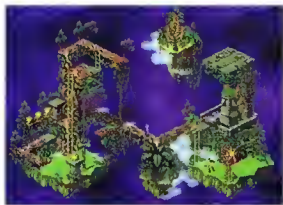
with points being awarded for "natural rhythm" across a variety of musical styles including reggae, hip hop and rave.

This *3rd Mix* also features a competitive mode for two players. However, Konami claims that *Beatmania* wasn't originally seen as a competitive game... and it shows. It's like playing a duet, with both parties coming in at different parts of the track. Trouble is, if one player is a little more skilled than the other it soon devolves into a cacophony.

Beatmania may well suffer initially from its off-the-wall look, with people reluctant to make complete asses of themselves on a game they haven't got a clue about. But Konami has plugged it as not only being fun to play, but fun to watch; a boast borne out at my local arcade, where I found crowds of people watching the coin-op DJs torture the turntables. And with music creation software currently being flogged for both the PC and PlayStation, it looks like *Beatmania* could finally get a break in the UK. Watch out for it – it's definitely a chart topper. ★★ ★ **Cam Anderson**



■ *Beatmania 3rd Mix* – arcade fun for budding spin doctors.



MACINTOSH

Lode Runner 2

■ Publisher: **MacSoft**
 ■ Developer: **Presage Software** ■ Price: **£29.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-8** ■ Requires: **PowerMac, 16Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive**

The classic monk-dodging platform puzzler of the '80s gets a 3D makeover.

■ Get the gold, dig a hole, dodge the monk! *Lode Runner* was an addictive hit back on the Apple II. Mindful of its success, MacSoft has overhauled this classic across five surreal 3D worlds. Playing as the lode runner it's your job to run, climb and swing around 150 levels, solving puzzles to collect gold, while avoiding traps and patrolling mad monks.

You are aided in your task by extra items and power-ups scattered around the play-zone. You are also equipped with a gun that can temporarily "phase out" parts of the scenery. Just to make life complicated, though, you can't shoot the monks; the only way to despatch them is to blast the path in front of them, so they fall into the void surrounding each level.

You should never judge a book by its cover, so I guess the same must apply to games and their packaging. *Lode Runner 2's* box is the fanciest I've seen in a while; stylishly designed with lots of embossing and metallic effect printing. Glance at the above screen shot, however, and you'll see that the in-game graphics aren't so impressive and are just too small – it's far too easy to lose the tiny runner among the elaborate scenery. You can pick the colour of your runner's outfit, but you'd better pick carefully, or you may never see them again.

Adding to these problems of scale is the inherent difficulty that's a constant in isometric-viewed games – you have to try and direct a character diagonally using only the keyboard. These concerns leave you with a game that only fanatics will take the time to get into. A shame, as behind the odd exterior lies a inventive puzzler.

On the plus side *Lode Runner* has a multi-player option that enables up to eight gold-hungry lode runners to play together over a network, either co-operatively or in competition. There's also a level editor – just in case you don't think 150 levels are enough. Even with these inclusions, though, the bottom line is that *Lode Runner 2* just doesn't update the original enough. ★★★ **Brian Smith**



GAME BOY

Super R.C. Pro-Am

■ Developer: **Rare** ■ Publisher: **Nintendo** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Price: **£9.99**
 ■ Players: **1-4 (with link cable and four-player adaptor)**

A Nintendo Classics re-release for Rare's pocket-sized black 'n' white racer with attitude.

■ Mighty UK code empire Rare didn't suddenly become best mates with Nintendo overnight, you know. Long, long before the company unleashed the likes of *GoldenEye* on an unsuspecting N64-owning world, the company ditched the Speccy for Nintendo's original console the NES. At this time Rare coded, among other things, *R.C. Pro Am*, a stunning-for-the-time knockabout racer that's still fondly remembered by those who are old enough to have been around in the era of the grey slip-on.

This Game Boy version of *Pro-Am* (this time re-released on the cheaper-price Nintendo Classics label) might look pretty basic, particularly with the Game Boy Color spreading its multi-hued spell throughout the world, but it ticks all the right gameplay boxes with Rare's customary grace.

The nippy remote control cars and isometric view suit the Boy's mini screen perfectly, but it's the vicious computer-opponent AI and pleasingly skiddy handling that make this such fun to play (it was possibly the first game to use power sliding). You're only ever racing against three opponents and each time you need to avoid fourth place if you're to go on to the next, increasingly twisty track, but the outrageous computer car cheating makes sure that every single race is fraught to the finish line. The speed-up arrows, and pick-up missiles and bombs only add to the fist waving "I'll get you" recriminations.

As well as desperately wanting to triumph over the dishonest CPU cars, you're encouraged to keep playing *Pro-Am* by being given the chance to upgrade your car. You can pick up new tyres, motors and batteries as you race round, with bonus cars acting as a *Ridge Racer*-like reward for winning your heats. It's not exactly *Gran Turismo* in miniature, but you could quite easily see off a few packs of AA batteries and an infinite number of dull train journeys before you tire of *Pro-Am*'s simple-yet-addictive racing. Another great game to add to the outstanding Rare CV. ★★★★★ **Robin Alway**

GAME BOY COLOR

LIVING COLOR

THE BEST NEW RELEASES FOR THE BOY COLOR

Every issue brings more full-colour releases for Nintendo's powerful, purple, pocket-filling pleaser. This issue, Reviews Editor Robin Alway buys the farm.



Game & Watch Gallery 2

■ Developer: **Nintendo**
 ■ Publisher: **Nintendo**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Price: **£19.99** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ Extras: **Game Boy-compatible**

It's just a little bit of history repeating...

■ They might not have quite the allure of Grandstand's *Astro Wars* but Nintendo's handheld Game and Watches were as desirable as £100 trainers and mobile phones to a nation of pre-teens in 1980.

The thing you forget is how simple the games were. Try the original *Parachute*, *Helmet*, *Chef*, *Vermin* and *Donkey*, and you'll find it hard to believe that you spent so long playing them.

Mindful of this fact, Nintendo has done a fine job of layering on value-adding features. You get enhanced, full-colour versions of each game, as well as some classic Nintendo gameplay – bonus stars, coin collecting and secret bits.

Nintendo has given some of its earliest videogaming work proper respect here. Everything's beautifully presented and there's more novelty surprises than in a Kinder Egg battery farm. You're amply rewarded in the Gallery section where tips and messages are posted as you dock-up high scores and new modes are revealed. Get enough stars from both classic and modern versions of the games and you can access a recording studio where Mario, Peach and Toad (on drums oddly enough) play tunes for you. All in all, this repackaging of Nintendo's ancient history has been done with the kind of care and detail you'd expect, and comes highly recommended to fans of Shigs and the boys. ★★★★★



Harvest Moon

■ Developer: **Victor Interactive Software**
 ■ Publisher: **THE Games**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Price: **£19.99** ■ Players: **1-2 (with link cable)**

Down on the farm...

■ Unless you're familiar with the original SNES version, it's probably fair to say you've never played anything like *Harvest Moon*. You chose a male or female farmer, pick a pet for company and start on an all-consuming quest to turn an abandoned homestead into a flourishing farm. With chickens.

Clear your land, till the soil, plant some seeds and wait for your first crop so that you can sell the resulting veg. Once you start reaping your hard-earned rewards you can expand into livestock and then sell the goods you produce.

With horses, house extensions and harvest festivals to follow, don't imagine *Harvest Moon* is easy. It needs management on a C&C scale as you battle against the elements, learn to rotate different crops and earn enough money to keep food on the table.

If the whole son/daughter of the soil concept doesn't appeal, it's only because you've yet to experience *Harvest*'s completely involving concept. The attention to detail is at Nintendo levels, both in the graphics and in the sheer amount of stuff that's included.

Before long you'll care about your farm enough to sneak a few minutes of cow-stroking in the middle of important business meetings. At the end of the day, cattle safely in their shed, this is character-building stuff and right up there with *Tetris* and *Zelda* as something you must play. And you will be it playing it until the cows come home. ★★★★★



Tweety and Sylvester – Breakfast on the run

■ Developer: **Infogrames**
 ■ Publisher: **Infogrames**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Price: **£19.99** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ Extras: **Game Boy-compatible**

At last. Your chance to throttle that canary.

■ This Warner Bros license should be perfect Game Boy Color fare, taking full cartoony advantage of the purple one's pigment-tastic capabilities, as well as letting you finally get Sylvester's catty claws around the annoyingly voiced canary once and for all.

And it starts well, with a side-viewed, 2D platforming section that sees Sylvester chasing Tweety in glorious Technicolour. Sadly, it all goes duo-chrome for the next isometric platforming section, and this makes up most of the game.

Entering the canary's house, you need to solve simple puzzles, negotiate obstacles and avoid enemies. Finding keys and shifting boxes to jump over barriers isn't even going stretch the younger players that this is aimed at. Worst of all, the poor controls make it a frustrating struggle to get away from baddies.

These flaws are a shame, because the graphics – even in the less impressive isometric sections – bode well for other Warner Bros titles. There's some enjoyment to be had as Tweety Pie stays constantly just out of your grasp, but ultimately this is another release that's been coded for kids with a shoulder-shrugging "Will this do?" attitude. Lets hope Bugs Bunny gets a bit more in the way of gameplay... ★★

On-line gaming

[illegible]

THE LAST HURRAH?

Or a rousing battle cry from a revitalised Sega? Dreamcast could make or break the one-time videogame champion of the world, but what does the Net have to say about it?

Depends where you look, really. If you're after the official, "Dreamcast is brilliant and you'd be a fool not to get an import model now" line, you'll have to head for Sega's official sites. Assuming that you want the gospel in English, Sega's Dreamcast site can be found at <http://www.sega.com/spotlight/features/dreamcast/>. Of course, if you have a smattering of Japanese, you can enjoy the official line with a sprinkling of the now; Dreamcast is out in Japan so the official Japanese site at <http://www.sega.co.jp/dreamcast/> is rooted firmly in the present tense, focusing on the triumvirate of so-so titles available at launch, and looking forward to the approaching winners. *Sega Rally 2*, anyone? Or are you too busy with *Gran Turismo* to care?

Naturally Arcade already has a Dreamcast, locked away in our testing chambers, but we're in a global minority of 150,000. And since most of those 150,000 lucky people who managed to buy a Dreamcast on the day of launch are Japanese, that puts us in an even tinier minority. This given, you'd expect the Web to be bare of Dreamcast sites because no bugger actually has one. Tish pish; that's never stopped anyone before, so naturally there are plenty of sources for the latest Dreamcast news, such as Dreamcast HQ: <http://www.dreamcast-hq.com/>, which is already hot off the mark with the latest cheat codes for *Virtua Fighter 3tb*. Dreamcast HQ follows the usual template for any half-decent fan site: the latest headlines, previews of upcoming titles, and of course those reviews. Er, at least, there will be reviews when the team finally gets its import machines. Expect almost identical coverage at the likes of Dreamcast Zone (<http://dreamcastzone.hypermart.net/>), Dreamcast Extreme (<http://www.dc-extreme.com/index2.html>), and possibly the coolest of the lot for stubbornly sticking to one of the original development names for the stupidly-monikered Dreamcast: Katana Edge (<http://www.katana-edge.com/>).

So, what are you going to do? You're unlikely to get a Dreamcast until it's officially released over here. So, as a public service, I bring you the Dreamcast game you can play now. It's the "find a Web site that uses the word Dreamcast in its title but has nothing to do with the Sega Dreamcast" game. Here are a couple of my favourites: <http://www.dreamcastle.com/> will tell you all about Sexativa; a herbal treatment that'll enhance e. If you need cooling off, take a look at [dreamcastle.com/tungs](http://www.dreamcastle.com/tungs). The merest Doctor Tung's Tongue Scraper should put you to sleep for a good half hour. Ugh.

your sex drive. If you need cooling off, take a look at <http://www.dreamcastle.com/tungs>. The merest mention of Doctor Tung's Tongue Scraper should put you off everything for a good half hour. Ugh.

What's New!
発売スケジュール
About Dreamcast
ソフトウェアデータベース
Dreamcast Q&A
伝言板



■ Dreamcast on-line: yet another fine example of just how excited some people get about the prospect of a new videogame system.

Web Ring *Moving in circles*

■ **Going round in circles on the Net isn't as easy as it sounds, but we've done it...**

Ain't it Cool News
<http://www.aint-it-cool-news.com/>

■ All the latest Hollywood gossip and the previews that the movie industry doesn't want you to see. As well as links, including one to...

Film Threat
<http://www.filmthreat.com/>

■ Drink in the worst the movie industry has to offer, then head off towards the scary acres of...

Spumco
<http://www.spumco.com/>
■ *Ren and Stimpy*
creator, John
Kricfalusi's here and
the *Ren and Stimpy*
spirit lives on in
Spumco's on-line
toon, *The Goddamn*
George Liquor
Program. It links to...



Centre for the Easily Amused
<http://www.amused.com/>

■ Spumco's enormous page of weird links brings us here, to the home of a million ways of wasting your time on-line. Finished? Go to...

Unknown Movies Page
<http://www.coastnet.com/greywizard/>

■ A database of all those films no-one's ever heard of, with some similarly pointless links to...

Dark Horizons
<http://www.darkhorizons.com/>

■ Back to the movies, with an up-and-coming Australian news site. Its links page returns us to...

The Obscure Store and Reading Room
<http://www.obscurestore.com/>

■ More weird news that you'll never find in the papers or on the television. It's almost too scary for words; run like the wind towards...

Drudge Retort

<http://www.drudge.com/>

■ **The Drudge Report:** A daily update of the news that The Man doesn't want you to read. The Drudge Retort: A clever parody featuring the news that's just too weird to be believed. Among its many daughter sites is...

Cruel Site of the Day

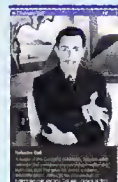
<http://www.cruel.com/>

■ Don't follow any of the links from this page if you think Chris Morris and Victor Lewis-Smith aren't funny. Go here instead...

WWWF
<http://www.wwwfights.com/>

■ If Simon Templar and James Bond had a fist fight, who would win? Enjoy a selection of unlikely made-up fights. Then head on to...

CD-ROM of the Month



Encarta Reference Suite 99

- Publisher: **Microsoft**
- Developer: **Microsoft**
- Price: **£99.99**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Requires: **Pentium, 16Mb RAM, Win 95**

■ Granted this is hardly cutting-edge stuff, but you can't play games all the time. These reference tools give you an insight into the world around you, an understanding of other cultures, a chance of winning the pub quiz, etc.

But what exactly are you getting for your moolah? Well, first out of the appropriately

weighty box is *Encarta Encyclopaedia Deluxe* 99. Long the world's favourite encyclopaedia, the 99 incarnation offers over 32,000 in-depth articles on everything from Arsenal strikers to zoology, backed up by some 18,000 pictures, sound-bites, videos and animations and 8,500 hyperlinks to further facts on the Web.

If your interests carry you further afield, then *World Atlas 99* has 1.2 million places, 7,000 geographical articles, 3,500 images, videos and sound-clips, 12 world tours and plenty of interactive maps.

Completing the package, Microsoft's *Bookshelf 99* proffers interactive versions of *Roget's Thesaurus*, *Chambers Dictionary*, *Bloomsbury Treasury of Quotations*, and *Harrap's French and German Concise Dictionaries*. A steal at £99.99 and, once you've taken advantage of the £20 money back offer, it's more like grand theft. ★★★★★ **Chris James**

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Previews	100	Hints and tips	100
Reviews	100	Demos	100
Features	100	Patches	100
Gamer Life	100	Stream Lounge	100
Feedback	100	Back Issues	100
Charts	100	Chat Forum	100
Release Schedule	100		
Diary	100	Fat negligible	
Next Week	100		
Paper View	100		

FUTURE GAMER: a magazine covering PC, PlayStation and N64 games. We deliver to your email address every week - free of charge.

DOSAGE: adults and children - 1 issue to be taken with liquid, weekly.

WARNING:
Contains Humour

Accessories



1. Wheel 64

■ For: **N64**
 ■ Price: **£49.99**
 ■ Available from: **ASCII**
 on 01923 202097

■ A cute steering wheel, much in keeping with the spirit of the N64. Indeed, ASCII suggests that the games best suited to this piece of hardware are *Mario Kart 64*, *Diddy Kong Racing* and *F-Zero X*. The Wheel 64 performs fluidly with all three, reflecting the skiddy, slidey nature of cartoon racers perfectly. It's light and comfortable to use perched on either

your lap or a table, and it locks into a number of different positions. The use of hold switches makes it just as easy to control in a one-handed top-steering position – handy if you need to keep a trigger finger free.

On the downside, the Wheel 64 is much less successful with more realistic racing sims such as *F1 World Grand Prix*, but in fairness that's not what it was designed for. ★★☆☆

2. Cyber Shock Pad

■ For: **PlayStation**
 ■ Price: **£19.99**
 ■ Available from: **Blaze**
 on 01302 325225

■ Most third-party PlayStation joypads feel flimsy and look tacky. The Cyber Shock just manages to rise above those common failings, but is still largely superfluous. Rather than replicating the design of the Sony original, Blaze has plumped for an innovative shape. The D-Pad and the function buttons are angled and positioned

more tightly. As far as the D-Pad goes, this seems like an attempt to make the digital control a little more fluid. Unfortunately, in any game where you need to carefully distinguish the horizontal axis from the vertical, things just get confusing. You'll also find that any game requiring you to constantly hover over the shoulder buttons will soon make your hands ache, as you find yourself twisting to conform to Blaze's less-than-ergonomic design. ★★

3. Cyborg 3D Stick

■ For: **PC**
 ■ Price: **£49.99**
 ■ Available from: **Saitek**
 on 01454 855050

■ Every joystick – however smooth or solid – will be uncomfortable to someone. Saitek has overcome this dilemma by making virtually every part of this intricately-designed product adjustable; screws fit its special tool, too, so there's no messing about with screwdrivers. The hand rest and jutting trigger make for relaxed

but accurate handling, and the rest and the throttle can be removed and repositioned on the other side of the joystick.

There are more control buttons than you need, and these can be configured to suit a game's individual requirements. If you're just beginning in the PC world, the installation and configuration processes may be off-putting, but if you're a more committed gamer, the Cyborg 3D stick is everything you need. An accompanying CD contains versions of ten games including *F1 97* and *G-Police*. ★★★★★

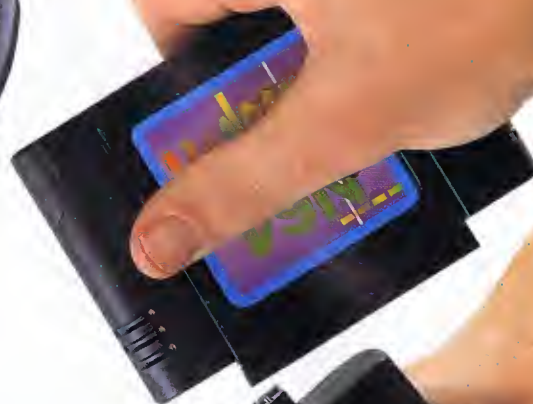
4. Destiny Force Feedback Steering Wheel

■ For: **PC**
 ■ Price: **£129.99**
 ■ Available from: **LMP**
 on 01992 503133

■ Of all the wheels to boast force feedback capabilities recently, this is the only one to do it with any real credibility. It's fair to call this wheel weighty, chunky, and all those other masculine adjectives that ought to be applied to a racing wheel, and in fact the Destiny does simulate that true sense of power you feel when



5



7



6



in charge of a thrusting fuel-injected motor.

The advantage of the Destiny is its close-up feel – play a game with it and you should always choose the windscreen camera view to get the full effect. The disadvantage is its slightly gluey handling; you need to push harder than you think for simple turns, confusing your sense of perspective. It also costs rather more than both an arm and a leg, so beware. ★★★★★

5. Formula Race Pro

■ For: **PlayStation/N64**
 ■ Price: **£69.99**
 ■ Available from: **Thrustmaster on 01276 609955**

■ These days you rarely play console games sat at a desk. This is what makes the table-bound design of most wheels so frustrating and the ergonomic design of the Formula Race Pro so refreshing, since it can be comfortably cradled in your lap with no apparent loss of control.

Closely based on the excellent Formula Sprint PC Wheel – but with careful alterations to button positioning to suit both PlayStation and N64 owners – the weight, spring and sensitivity of this wheel combine to make it the best currently available for console (even at its high price point). The only downer is the pedal board, which is flimsy and liable to be inadvertently kicked all over the floor during a frantic circuit. ★★★★★

6. Jordan Grand Prix Racing Wheel II

■ For: **PlayStation/N64**
 ■ Price: **£59.99**
 ■ Available from: **Joytech on 01525 852900**

■ Following hot on the heels of the original Jordan Grand Prix Racing Wheel (see Accessories, Arcade 1) comes a sequel. Don't get too excited just yet, though – the major differences are the addition of rubber grips and some work that gives a slightly more solid

feel to the whole wheel. While these are certainly welcome changes, the mildly irritating oversensitivity of the Jordan has not been rectified, despite the inclusion of a largely ineffectual and tricky-to-configure sensitivity control. When we put it through its paces on *TOCA 2*, the Jordan II represented the feel of a race wheel well enough, but it simply couldn't beat the accuracy of your average joypad. Although it fared better on arcade-based racers, the Jordan may still be too expensive to justify itself. ★★★

7. N64 Passport

■ For: **N64**
 ■ Price: **£30**
 ■ Available from: **Visions on 0113 261 3424**

■ Although *Zelda* had a nearly simultaneous worldwide release, UK N64 owners are usually left to stare enviously across the water as their American and Japanese counterparts play the best games months before a PAL release. So hurrah for the N64 Passport, which enables you to stick an import game in your slot and play

away having entered a special code to break through the game's territorial lock-out. The trouble is, although the built-in codes work with the majority of games, once cartridge manufacturers work their way round this, the Passport will be rendered obsolete immediately – and, at the time of writing, the promised updated codes haven't materialised on the Internet. For the time being, the Passport does exactly what it says on the tin, albeit for rather more cash than we might have hoped. ★★★★★

Film of the Month



FREAKY CRAWLIES

ELECTRICS AND ENTOMOLOGY TOGETHER AT LAST! OR TOGETHER AGAIN! WHATEVER...

A Bug's Life

■ Director: **John Lasseter** ■ Voices: **Dave Foley, Kevin Spacey, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Denis Leary** ■ UK release: **5 February**

In which mad inventor and loser termite Flik defends his ant colony from certain destruction at the pincers of a rampant swarm of grasshoppers by constructing a huge fake bird and rounding up a troop of useless Flea Circus performers. Think *The Magnificent Seven* under a magnifying glass and you're kind of getting there. Sort of.

Honestly. You wait years for a computer-generated movie about existential ant farms and then two come along at once. Having been beaten to the box-office by DreamWork's rather similar *Antz*, *A Bug's Life* was always going to be a tougher proposition to flog to seen-it-done-it punters. So it's sighs of relief all round at Pixar as its insect effort delivers enough requisite wows to wrench itself away from its potential Siamese twin reputation.

It's inevitable that two movies with such similar themes will draw comparisons, so let's get the formalities out of the way. While the characters in *Antz*

looked like bulimic ETs, the doe-eyed *Bug's Life* cast look like they've been dragged from a '30s Disney short. While *Antz* relied on a sparky script to deliver the laughs, *A Bug's Life* goes all out for sense-spannering slapstick. And finally – and perhaps most importantly – while *Antz* boasted a subversive adult edge to placate the grown-ups, *A Bug's Life* is aimed squarely at those with a single-digit age.

A Bug's Life is brimming with the kind of whacked-out invention you'd normally see in a Tex Avery short. Following his innovative *Toy Story*, Pixar maestro John Lasseter empties his creative-tornado-for-a-brain on to the screen, pummeling the viewer with a furious assault of sight gags. Some are subtle, but most, like the acrobatics of the Flea Circus sequence, mercilessly hammer the funny bone. Arguably, it would be a better movie if it weren't so insistent in its slapstick and slowed down for a second, but as a display in virtuoso cartooning, it's a firework in the eye for other animators.

Given *Antz*'s heavyweight line-up of Stone, Stallone and Woody Allen, it's good to hear the gobs behind *A Bug's Life* holding their own. Dave Foley equips Flik with bumbling charm, Dennis Leary grouches as a macho Ladybird, but it's Kevin Spacey who steals the reels as cricket dictator Hopper. An end-credits sequence that will glue you to your seat with a selection of spoof out-takes rounds things off for what amounts to 90 minutes of retina-frazzling, brain-numbing fun. ★★ ★★



■ Coke-fuelled murder in...

Very Bad Things

■ Director: **Peter Berg**
■ Starring: **Christian Slater, Daniel Stern, Cameron Diaz**
■ UK release: **29 January**

■ If the thought of oaring in Farrelly Brothers slapstick over Tarantino-trademarked violence sounds like a Very Bad Idea, then you're probably right. Shaking an uncomfortable mix of Jacobean revenge drama with none-more-black comedy, Peter Berg's directorial debut aims at satire and ends up a confused, cynical exercise in designer sadism.

Admittedly, it all starts promisingly. A week before the big day with neurotic bride Laura (Diaz), groom-to-be Kyle (Jon Favreau) is dragged to Las Vegas by his troop of yuppie pals for a stimulant-fuelled stag do. Bottles are clanked, sherbert is snorted and nauseating camera-angles tip and bow until one of Kyle's entourage accidentally impales a hooker's head on a coat hanger while he tries to get his money's worth in a hotel bathroom. The panic of *What To Do With The Body* soon takes an illogical shift as bad-boy Boyd (Slater) cajoles his pals into sawing the hooker into burial-size bits and dumping the body in the Nevada desert. And then things get really stupid.

Berg soon sends the movie into a spiral of mean-spirited farce as the bickering friends gulp a dose of guilt and paranoia and start murdering each other to cover up the homicide. So as the body count rises to ludicrous levels, Christian Slater's shit-eating grin widens as he chucks an extra ten years on his *Heathers* psycho-teen and indulges in a Jack Nicholson impersonation that's less hammy homage, more acting karaoke. Only Cameron Diaz's schizo bride escapes with dignity intact in an otherwise misjudged, misanthropic comedy that wrongly assumes histrionics equal hysterics. ★★

Shakespeare in Love

■ Director: **John Madden**
■ Starring: **Joseph Fiennes, Ben Affleck, Gwyneth Paltrow, Geoffrey Rush**
■ UK release: **29 January**

■ For a playwright who's had maggots chewing at his jaw for four hundred years, Shakespeare is very much alive and well and flogging his iambic pentameters to the great unwashed. Following Al Pacino's *Looking For Richard* and Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo & Juliet*, director John Madden



further the cause to make the Bard accessible to non-thesps with this commendably bawdy take on Shokie's so-called life.

A young, ruffled Shakespeare (Joseph Fiennes) is suffering from writer's block – not good when he's been commissioned to scrawl a play for dental monstrosity Philip Henslowe (Geoffrey Rush).

Struggling to finish *Romeo & Ethel: A Pirate's Daughter*, Shokie turns his attentions to amorous matters in the form of Lady Viola de Lesseps (Gwyneth Paltrow), who, unbeknownst to the Bard, disguises herself as a bloke to secure a role in his new play. What follows is a comedy of errors courtesy of Tom Stoppard's script, which balances genuine wit, bawdy slapstick and big-hearted romance in one satisfying whole.

Revelling in the script, the cast clearly have a laugh delivering – or in the case of Rush dribbling – their lines, and all get impeccably (a considerable feat when you've got talent as diverse as Ben Affleck, Judi Dench and Martin Clunes on board). Mainstream enough to appeal to everybody, but dropping in in-jokes for Bard smart-arses, Madden has not only managed to make an accessible Shakespeare pic – he's also made a very funny movie. Go see what the fuss is about. ★★☆☆

Psycho

■ Director: **Gus Van Sant**
■ Starring: **Vince Vaughn, Anne Heche, Julianne Moore**
■ UK release: **8 January**

■ When Gus Van Sant announced last April that he was about to



■ Shakespeare for the '90s.

commit cinematic sacrilege by remaking Hitchcock's classic, the overall response from the movie community was a resounding "Why?". Now his publicity-baiting rehash is finally released in the UK, we're really none the wiser, as the end result is neither shocking enough to re-fire the controversy of the genre-busting original, nor inspired enough to offer a new slant on a much-imitated movie.

The early idea was for Van Sant to use Hitchcock's original storyboards and deliver a shot-for-shot remake – and on the whole, that's exactly what you get. The motel details are the same, the screeching strings still shriek and the celebrated shower sequence gets a coat of gory Technicolor. So far, so fanboy.

Where *Psycho* really comes a cropper is in its performances. Celebrity lesbian Anne Heche gives a vacant reading of Janet Leigh's original feisty shower-fodder, Julianne Moore is defiantly one-dimensional as Heche's sister and Vince Vaughn confirms all those miscasting fears by painting Norman Bates as a gibbering hick. Whereas Perkins' endowed Bates with a creepy childlike veneer, Vaughn goes all out for gratuitous loon, a voyeur who wanks away as his guests take a shower and sees storm clouds thundering across his eyes when he flies into one of his shit-fits. He may as well be blundering about the hotel with I AM A PSYCHO sprayed on his T-shirt. It might have worked in *Scream*, but it doesn't here.

If Van Sant's idea of updating Hitchcock's proto-slasher for the '90s is to shove in a shot of Viggo Mortensen flashing his blotchy arse and crowbar in some extra flesh during the shower scene, then he's sadly mistaken. For curiosity value, it's a diverting enough retread for fans of the original. For the average punter, it's more a case of This Film's Crap, Let's Slash The Geeks. It goes without saying that we look forward to Hollywood's



■ Eek, eek, eek! It's Psycho.

Casablanca remake (with Michael J Fox and Whoopi Goldberg) like a trowel up the arse. ★★

Dobermann

■ Director: **Jan Kounen**
■ Starring: **Vincent Cassel, Monica Belucci, Tcheky Karyo**
■ UK release: **15 January**

■ Opening with a computer-generated dog pissing on the credits and climaxing with one of the most spectacularly grisly demises in modern moviedom, *Dobermann* is a wake-up call for all those who think that French films begin and end with frosty threesomes and cafe-stool philosophers.

Our Gallic cousins have always favoured style over content in their movies, but Jan Kounen's audacious direction flings it way up to 11 as his screen-spasming camera-work makes MTV look like a BBC testcard. The plot (and we're talking

back-of-a-stamp complexity here) follows the attempts of insane, coke-hoovering copper Tcheky Karyo to nail famed supercriminal Dobermann (Cassel) and his gang of psychotic undesirables. And that really is it. But what the film lacks in narrative it more than makes up for with its strobing visuals and amphetamine editing. Tongue crushed against cheek, Kounen has set out to drag comic-book dynamics on to the big screen and he largely succeeds (we defy you not to wow at an outrageous split-screen sequence that smithereens images all over the screen and ends up looking like a fly's-eye view of the *Dallas* credits). Couple the brain-nailing visuals with a string of über-violence (the shotgun vasectomies and grenade decapitations may spin the guts of the weaker-stomached), and the result is a hectic, head-spin of a movie.

Where *Dobermann* is much less successful is in the one-note performances – every single character is so singularly lacking in redeeming features that the only thing you're left rooting for is the bravado camerawork. Still, with its superb hyperkinetic visual acrobatics, France's answer to *Natural Born Killers* is well worth seeking out. The word "cult" (though not necessarily classic) spring to mind. ★★☆☆



■ Die Dobermann...

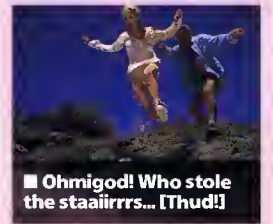
Videos to Rent



■ Still seeking some kind of direction...

Lost In Space

■ **Entertainment In Video**
■ Remaking ancient childrens' TV series for a '90s cinema audience seems to be a hobby of producers with no new ideas, but *Lost In Space* really should have been left to rot on UK Gold. The film is like a long episode of *Red Dwarf* devoid of jokes, a concept complemented by Matt Le Blanc who acts just like Joey from *Friends* but without the benefit of any decent lines. Off to populate a distant planet, the Robinsons' plans are disrupted by the evil Dr Smith (Gary Oldman) and they get, er, a bit lost. Nice explosions, though. ★★



■ Ohmigod! Who stole the staaairrrs... [Thud!]

Six Days Seven Nights

■ **Touchstone**
■ More proof that – Courtney Cox excepted – films touched by the *Friends*' stars turn to slush. David Schwimmer materialises briefly in *Six Days Seven Nights*, searching for his lost fiancée (Anne Heche), but – too late – she's already been seduced by rough diamond Harrison Ford in a virtual repeat of his scenes with Kate Kapshaw in *Indiana Jones and the Temple Of Doom*. Except here the romancing takes a lot longer and there are no snake pits or quasi-pagan rituals to liven things up.

Ford and Heche are mildly engaging and the tropical island setting is pleasant, but if your girlfriend decides to treat you to this, keep a crossword handy. ★★

Resurrection Man

■ **Polygram**
■ Loosely based on the life of Loyalist murderer Lenny Murphy, *Resurrection Man* is not one for a romantic evening. The screenplay was adapted by Eoin McNamee from his (by all accounts) better novel and certainly appears to have lost some of its coherence. The film is heavy with close-up violence, though it's very stylised which makes it more menacing – any moral *Resurrection Man* might otherwise have had is well disguised. Sectarian violence in '70s Belfast may have been a fairly arbitrary business, but for anybody already confused by the complex history of the Northern Ireland troubles, this film doesn't help matters. ★★

Videos to Buy

■ Up 'n' Under? Down 'n' out more like.



Good Will Hunting

■ **Buena Vista**
■ This may be remembered as the film that launched Matt Damon and Ben Affleck into the Hollywood mainstream, but we shouldn't forget that the duo wrote the thing and came up with a script sharp enough to save the concept from being smothered by cheese.

Will Hunting's a reluctant genius, preferring to hang out with his buddies in Boston's Irish neighbourhood rather than solve mathematical codes for the government. Robin

Williams (in decent film shock) is the poly lecturer who helps Will find a true purpose in life. Which turns out to be falling in love with Minnie Driver, and who can blame him? ★★☆☆

Up 'N' Under

■ **Entertainment In Video**
■ Even if you loved *The Full Monty*, you can't excuse it for giving carte blanche to this repeat-formula rubbish. The bloke from *2 Point 4 Children* trains a struggling local rugby league team for a bet and they dig deep into their reserves of Northern, working-class grit to emerge as winners in the end.

It's also a comedy, not that you'd guess from the utterly unfunny script, but Gryff Rhys-Jones is usually a giveaway. As for Samantha Janus and Neil Morrissey, the workhouse is too good for them. ★

Book of the Month

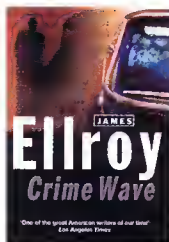


■ Dope-dealing playboys, pimping cops and psycho pianists – some nice people Mr Ellroy knows, then.

ELLOY CONFIDENTIAL

USA'S TOP CRIME WRITER ON THE QT AND VERY HUSH HUSH

Crime Wave



■ Author: **James Ellroy**
 ■ Publisher: **Century**
 ■ Price: **£15.99**
 ■ ISBN: **0-7126-79685**

Even if you're not familiar with James Ellroy's brilliant LA quartet, you probably will know the plot of last year's classic cinema thriller *LA Confidential*. As stunning as that film was, it's impossible to do justice to Ellroy's frenetic prose without having felt its high-speed rhythm for yourself. Taking '50s cop/crim slang as his root, giving it a drunken intellectual slant and then finally twisting the language like a torturer, he somehow emerges having produced some classic lines of beat poetry.

Ellroy's no slouch when it comes to the plot, either. *Hollywood Shakedown*, one of two novellas included in this book, rattles past like gunfire, leaving you to mentally untie the knots at the end, until eventually you're left with a single, immaculate thread.

Ellroy sets *Hollywood Shakedown* in the 1950s because it's a time distant enough to indulge in a little fantasy, yet still recent enough to genuinely reflect

the seediness, corruption, perversion and desperation that we believe exists in the modern city. As with most of Ellroy's work, the narrator isn't much of a hero. Minor accordion-playing celebrity and impromptu underworld investigator Dick Contino is funny, sharp and lovably confused but he's also self-obsessed, violent and disgusting so it's difficult to empathise with him.

Instead Dick invites us to join him on a fast-paced stagger along LA's thin blue line between high and low, truth and lies and life and death. On the way we pass dope-dealing playboys, pimping cops, Hollywood snitches, gay pinko lawyers, psychopathic pianists and the ubiquitous, maniacal reporter from scandal mag *Hush-Hush*, for whom everything is on the QT. If at the end of it you want to wash your hands of the entire affair, fine. Find your own moral, Ellroy seems to be saying, but while you're with me you're going to have a blast. ★★ ★★ **Sam Richards**

Robot wars technical manual

■ Author: **Alan Baker**
 ■ Publisher: **Boxtree**
 ■ Price: **£14.99**
 ■ ISBN: **0-7522-1361-X**



Materialising on our Sunday lunchtime TV screens a year ago, *Robot Wars*' endearing naivety became perfect hangover therapy. Not since Dr Heinz-Wolff's *Great Egg Race* had home-made technology been so fashionable, but *Robot Wars* gave garage geeks a new home. Add Jonathan Pierce's commentary and Phillipa Forrester's soothing presence to the equation, and you've got a show which regularly commands three million viewers.

This book leans heavily toward the technical aspects of building a bot. The mechanics are described in fairly approachable terms, so for anyone who's mocked the dismal, spluttering, attempts of last series' roboteers (who can forget the unworkable Psycho Sprout?), this is your chance to do better. Learn from the makers of the show's fearsome house robots and enjoy Phillipa in her alluring black outfit while you're at it.

Sadly, it appears that Alan Baker has bypassed the vein of nostalgic humour evident in the TV show with his use of workaday prose. ★★ ★ **Sam Richards**

Demon barber

■ Author: **Lynn Barber**
 ■ Publisher: **Viking**
 ■ Price: **£17.99**
 ■ ISBN: **0-670-85354-2**



Even if her name isn't familiar, you'll have read Lynn Barber's interviews, probably while lounging on the sofa after a hefty roast dinner. She's the celeb interviewer for the *Observer* and before that the *Independent On Sunday* and the *Telegraph*.

While thumbing this collection of tête-à-têtes, we were struck by how many of these pieces we had read before without noticing the byline. Within her thoroughly-researched framework, Barber gives her subjects room to move, so they either shine or hang themselves. Jarvis Cocker and Eddie Izzard couldn't come across as anything other than decent blokes, while Alan Clark is wholly objectionable.

Occasionally, Barber does attempt to force an opinion, even when contradicted. Stephen Fry eloquently rejects therapy as an option and he's accused of being in denial. Damien Hirst doesn't want to find his real father and he's accused of denial, too. But forgive Barber's little obsessions and this is a true insight into '90s celeb life. ★★ ★ **Sam Richards**

Vinnie – The Autobiography

■ Author: **Vinnie Jones**
 ■ Publisher: **Headline**
 ■ Price: **£16.99**
 ■ ISBN: **0-7472-2122-7**



Vinnie Jones the hood carrier turned footie hardman. Founder member of the Wimbledon "Crazy Gang". Welsh captain. QPR coach. And Big Chris the debt collector from UK gangster flick *Lock Stock And Two Smoking Barrels*. It's been a strange ride for the Hertfordshire lad, and time for an autobiography, but does it tell us anything we hadn't guessed?

Not really. The impression is that Vinnie is a decent chap, a better footballer than often given credit for, he's impetuous and he craves attention, a trait that often manifests itself in violence. Vinnie is regretful of his outbursts on and off the pitch, but also realises that it's what's made him interesting. Threatening Leeds manager Howard Wilkinson with a shotgun, grabbing Gazza's bollocks and getting booked after five seconds of a game are all things that pro footballers don't do. In a world of Shearers, he is a "character", but he's nothing too complicated. If you're looking for psychological pointers, the book begins with a tale of junior Vinnie nicking £20 from his Dad – hardly scarred-for-life stuff. ★★ ★ **Sam Richards**

Kingdom Gone

■ Author: **Frank Lean**
 ■ Publisher: **Heinemann**
 ■ Price: **£15.99**
 ■ ISBN: **0-434-00450-2**



Fred Travis, an entrepreneur with links to the growing Children of Light cult is found stone dead clutching the card of ex-private eye David

Cunane. Released by the police, Cunane is approached by Aldous Arkwright, spiritual guru of the Children, who persuades him to visit the cult premises. Here Cunane meets cultist Melanie who pleads for help to escape. Cunane rescues Melanie, making a mess of one of the cult's heavy mob in the process. Meanwhile Clint, Cunane's nightclub-owning friend's giant brother is accused of the murder, and suspicions of evidence tampering and an unlikely friendship between Clint and local pop impresario Melville Monkton are rife.

As you can tell from this summary, Lean's involving story is breathless and characters are introduced with exhilarating rapidity. Persevere, and all leads can be traced back ingeniously to Fred Travis' death. Witty, fast and thoroughly gripping, *Kingdom Gone* is a tremendous example of the modern British thriller.

★★ ★ **Rich Pelley**



■ Busta hides a whopping shiner.

Boom Boom Satellites
Out Loud
■ Label: R&S



Sometimes all that's needed to make the world happy again is an

album of brilliant, provocative Japanese driving techno, courtesy of the Boom Boom Satellites. When we say driving, we mean driving, as the lads are trussed up in rally gear behind the wheel of an electric blue Renault Alpine on the album's cover (the car, by the way, is itself a design masterpiece and should be appropriated by Sony for *Gran Turismo 2* if the company has any sense).

Gorgeous opener "Missing Note" is an inconspicuous ignition, taking seven minutes to swell to full size, like a magic paper flower when added to water. After that, there's no stopping the Boom Boom boys, "Batter the Jam No 3" chews up pieces of flute and spits them out all over the road. Top speed is reached on "Oneness", a song that proves the boys can handle a guitar as well as they do a gearstick – it's as outrageously noisy as putting your ear to a roaring exhaust. If not the drive of your life, *Out Loud* is at least an exhilarating round-the-block spin in a snazzy new motor.

★★★★ Sam Richards

Busta Rhymes
Extinction Level Event
■ Label: East West



You'll know him as the dreadlocked headcase responsible for sampling the *Knight Rider* theme on "Turn It Up/Fire It Up": the man who claimed he had us (woooo-haaaah) all in check.

Now, though, like every other rapper in the known universe, Busta has recorded his pre-millennium opus, and while the album opens with a hilarious over-the-top armageddon prophecy, he soon forgets any notion of a central theme and heads off on several conflicting tangents, often all at once, and always at 278mph.

Busta may not inhabit the same arena as the slightly more cerebral Wu-Tang and Rawkus posers, but he's no Puff Daddy either – his contemporary style is always influenced by the old-skool "block party" mentality from which he emerged. However menacing those string loops become, though, Busta can't help but entertain. His showstopper is "This Means War!!", a re-hash of Black Sabbath's "Iron Man", starring the vocal talents of Ozzy himself. ★★★ Sam Richards

Locked on Volume 3
Mixed by Ramsey and Fen
■ Label: Virgin Records



We live in a world where crossovers and fusions are making it increasingly difficult to

categorise music; a world where

styles overlap and mix CDs are bastions of eclecticism. Stubbornly bucking this trend, *Locked On Volume 3* brings together 18 barely-distinguishable "speed garage" cuts. Few will have cared much about the rapid ascent and subsequent decline of this highly London-centric dance scene but *Locked On Volume 3*'s collection of bland, tuneless predictability provides little excuse for fond recollection. A woman sings, a keyboard riff bores on, something goes "beep" somewhere else and before you've noticed, the CD's over. On this evidence, "speed garage" will not be recognised as one of the decade's defining movements. ★ Rich Pelley

Snowpony
The Slow Motion World of Snowpony
■ Label: Radioactive



Katherine Gifford and Debbie Googe, the core members of Snowpony,

paid their experimental dues in the ranks of Stereolab, My Bloody Valentine and Moonshake.

Musically, Snowpony has pulled away from the shadows of its former employers, but the urge to tinker with existing forms of music remain intact. All Snowpony songs are based around loops of unusual samples – anything from classical strings to soulful brass to angular guitar – which are then moulded into an organic whole. The resulting creations are often strangely beautiful, although titles such as "3 Can Keep A Secret (When 2 Are Dead)", suggest the group would rather scare the pants off you than comfort you in your hour of need.

The twin vocals tracing across baroque melodies are reminiscent of the Throwing Muses, although Snowpony could do with some of the Muses band's sporadic bursts of unbridled celebration. *Music in Slow Motion* is regularly gorgeous, but it's also occasionally drab. ★★★ Sam Richards

Millennium Jukebox

Music that's making the Arcade office a better place to be

Bonnie Prince Billy
I See A Darkness (LP)
■ Label: Domino

■ Country geezer with ginger 'tache, otherwise known as Palace, Push or just plain Will Oldham, makes strange, but rather wonderful record. Superb for long evenings.

Ed Rush & Optical
Wormhole (LP)
■ Label: Virus

■ The none-more-black junglists trip nimbly along a razor-sharp funk edge. Ten cups of black coffee on an

absinthe hangover and the inside of your head might sound like this.

Four Tet
Misnomer (12-inch)
■ Label: Output

■ Queasy flute-strings-n'-beat that draws you into its welcoming home and force-feeds you soufflé.

Music Instructor
Featuring Abe
Get Freaky (single)
■ Label: Fuel

■ Mad Germans make '80s-style techno/rap

record featuring vocals by little green Abe Mudoken of *Oddworld* fame. Sounds like Snap's "The Power" crossed with "Rock Me Amadeus". Not available in the UK, thankfully.

V/A
Megasoft Office (LP)
■ Label: F Communications

■ Marvellous ambient jazz-tinged compilation, specifically designed for calming tense office situations. Like Arcade's deadlines never existed.



■ Meet Coldcut's sprite-ly alter-egos.

CUTTING EDGE
KINGS OF THE REMIX GET REMIXED



Coldcut
Let Us Replay
■ Label: Ninja Tune

In the '80s Coldcut pioneered sampling technology, invented the cut-'n'-mix record and launched the careers of Yazz and Lisa Stansfield among others. In the '90s it set up one of England's coolest record labels (Ninja Tune) and made the best DJ mix compilation ever (*Journeys by DJ Volume One*).

More recently, it has been creating its own software, including *ReCycle*, which chews up your tracks and randomly remixes them. *Let Us Replay* is a frolicsome reiteration of all Coldcut's previous achievements, taking in a variety of remixes, collaborations and live tracks; the deliberate incoherence and wide scope of this LP represents the duo more accurately than a straightforward album release could ever do.

The array of collaborators pretty much summarises Coldcut's oblique, yet infectious, take on modern music. Carl Craig propels "Rubaiyat" down an ultra-modern highway, while the Arcade office favourite Cornelius generates some magical air currents beneath the wings of "Atomic Moog 2000". Unknown vocalists and classical string players rub shoulders with rave veterans Shut Up And Dance. "This is a journey into sound" reverberates for the 700th time, but is tempered by the towering humour of "Last Night a Cliché Saved My Life", impressively featuring both Coldcut's mentor, Grandmaster Flash, and its protégé, DJ Food.

If you don't like the way Coldcut cuts it, or think you could do better yourself, a second CD included in the pack features an extensive demo of its new audio sequencing toy *V-Jamm*, which enables you to rearrange a raft of Coldcut tracks to your heart's content. Coldcut is still providing more width than your average groundbreaking electro-pop-hip-hop sampladelic postmodern beat combo. ★★★★★

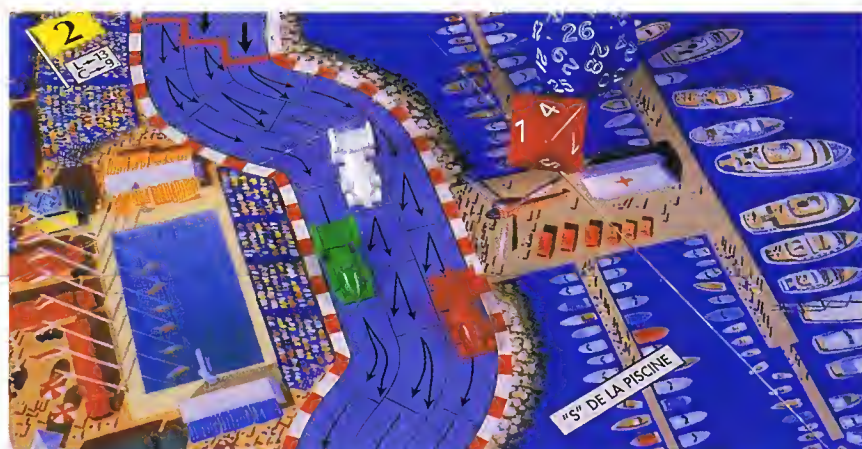
Sam Richards



■ Jon Moore: Coldcut's musical maestro



■ Matt Black: Coldcut's other musical maestro.



NEW FORMULA

THE SLOWEST, STEALTHIEST GRAND PRIX GAME EVER

Formula Dé

■ Publisher: **Euro Games** ■ Available from: **Esdevium Games on 01252 326116**
 ■ Price: **£29.95** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **2-10**

Videogame racers are determined in their pursuit of speed, mainly for the adrenaline rush and the excitement. Board games can't provide the same level of cheap thrills, however, which is why *Formula Dé* opts for a different approach. You may think that a Grand Prix board game misses the point entirely, but in *Formula Dé* you must rely on a combination of tactics and dice gambling in order to leave your opponents choking on carbon monoxide.

Although there are options for increasingly complex rules, the basic concept is simple. Your car has six gears,

each with its own die – the higher the gear, the higher the number you can roll and the more spaces you can move. Scooting round in sixth is not an option, though, because at each corner you're required to make a specified number of stops and overshooting loses you tyre and brake points. This is a risk that you must take to steal a march on your fellow drivers, but once all your tyre and break points are exhausted, you'll spin horribly into the sand.

Two-player racing is largely a risk management contest, but the more cars there are on a three-lane track, the more you'll need to rely on tactical skill. Racing is a tense affair and each circuit can take up to an hour.

Even if you consider the spectacle of overpaid chisel-jaws driving around the same course 72 times fatiguing, you can still enjoy *Formula Dé* as it has little to do with real Formula One. Rolling dice to move around the board? It's *Ludo* for the *Gran Turismo* generation. ★★★ **Sam Richards**



PORTABLE POWER POTENT PENTIUM PC PLEASURE

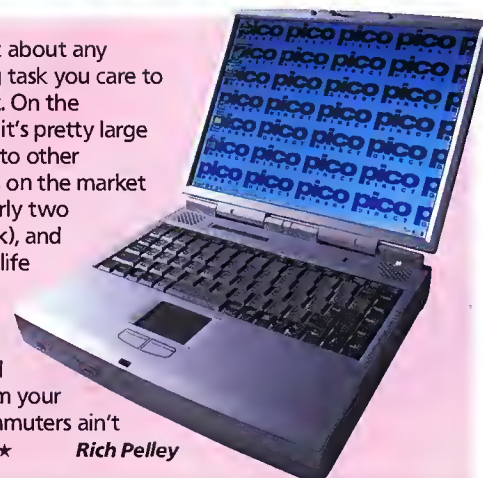
Silvernote notebook PC

■ Available from: **Pico on 01483 402111**
 ■ Price: **£1,937**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ There was a time when a notebook computer was an

object of wonder. Whip one out of your bag and you would be instantly surrounded by people going "ooh" and "aah". Now, though, every other person on the 8.15am Bristol-to-London express has one, and they've lost the wow factor.

Unless, that is, your notebook is as sleek as Pico's new Silvernote. But the Pico doesn't appeal on looks alone: inside that case is a 300MHz Pentium II chip, 64Mb of SDRAM and a 4.2Gb hard drive, which means it's probably more powerful than the PC on your office desk. With built-in floppy and CD-ROM drives, USB and FireWire ports and a 13.1-inch thin film transistor display, we're looking at a machine that'll

handle just about any computing task you care to throw at it. On the downside, it's pretty large compared to other notebooks on the market (being nearly two inches thick), and its battery life isn't great. But two hours of "oohs" and "aahs" from your fellow commuters ain't bad...★★★★ **Rich Pelley**



■ You may never have to adjust your watch again.

BEAT THE CLOCK IT'S THE DECIMAL TIME ZONE Swatch Biel Mean Time Watch

■ Available from: **Swatch**
 ■ Price: **£50** ■ Release date: **February**

The Berlin Wall is yesterday's rubble, Europe will soon have a single currency and the Internet means the other side of the world is only a mouse-click away. Time is the final frontier and Swatch is doing the best to break through it. Here is its new watch, running not by hours and minutes, but by "beats", of which there are 1,000 in a day; each the equivalent of one minute, 26.4 seconds.

Decimalisation gone mad? Well, yes, but the whole point of the Biel Mean Time Watch (named after its crazed inventor, we suppose), is that it eradicates

those pesky international time zones. With the Biel Meridian set in Switzerland in October, the entire world is already ticking to the same beat clock, whatever the time of day. Those round-the-world trips, once a frenzy of watch recalibration-action, will now pass by calmly and peacefully.

Check out the Swatch Web site at <http://www.swatch.com/>. As well as being able to see the watches here, you can also download Beat Desktop Clocks. See you in the pub at 782 beats then. Mine's a pint. ★★★ **Chas Davies**



MINIATURE MUSICAL MARVELS

Who needs all that hiss and tape decay when a MiniDisc recorder will enable you to make near-CD quality recordings? T3 magazine's Russell Deeks rounds up the portable – and nearly portable – recorders gracing the hippest hips this season.

AM-F5

- Available from: **Aiwa** on 0990 902902
- Price: **£230**
- Release date: **on sale now**

Looking much more like a traditional personal stereo than the other models featured here, the Aiwa's also the cheapest. This isn't reflected too much in the sound quality, though, which is nice. Where the AM-F5 seems to have suffered somewhat is on the design front; simplicity has its merits, sure, but when you're dealing with new technology, surely you want something a bit more flash to wave about? What's more, the controls aren't as clearly labelled, and the display isn't as user-friendly, as the other models we've looked at, making it more fiddly to operate. The remote's also disappointing – it's just a strip of black plastic with a couple of buttons. But to be fair, the AM-F5 is the only model here that comes with a stereo mic supplied, it weighs as little as the Sharp and the Kenwood and (with three AA batteries attached) offers continuous play of up to 26 hours. ★★★



MZ-R5ST

- Available from: **Sony** on 0990 111999
- Price: **£500**
- Release date: **on sale now**

Now this is a fine idea. You see, while machines like the Sharp and Kenwood personal recorders make recording tracks, naming and editing them pretty straightforward, they just can't compare with a separate MiniDisc player for ease of use. So Sony has come up with a two-piece solution. For listening to MiniDiscs, you've got a personal player; then, when you want to make recordings, just slot it into its docking station and you're working with fully formed hi-fi separates.

The only drawbacks with this idea are that your MD recorder doesn't then double as a dictaphone (as the other personal recorders on test here can), and of course if you're wanting to take it round your mate's to record his Oasis CD it's that much more bulky – but then recording other people's albums is against the law, anyway. The MZ-R5ST sounds fantastic, and in personal player mode you're looking at a mere 185 grammes to lug around. We don't know about the battery life, but it should be reasonable, since the MZ player uses both a rechargeable and two AA batteries. ★★★★



OUR CHOICE

DMC-J7R

- Available from: **Kenwood** on 01923 816444
- Price: **£250**
- Release date: **on sale now**

Easily the most stylish model we've tested, coming as it does in a casing that's a lovely rich blue. There are just enough buttons on the front to make recording and naming tracks relatively simple, but not enough to make the fascia look cluttered. As with the Sharp model, there's a rather stylish remote complete with backlight, although for some reason this hasn't been made to match the unit itself. There are separate optical/line and mic inputs, though there's no optical cable supplied (unlike with the Sharp MD-MS722H). And why all the Sharp comparisons? Because the machine inside is exactly the same – so you get the same sound quality and same Bass Boost. The DMC-J7R weighs about the same, too, although for some reason the Kenwood will give you just 14.5 hours of play – and that's using the rechargeable battery plus two AAs, as opposed to the Sharp's one. Still, it looks better, though. ★★★★★



MD-MS722H

- Available from: **Sharp** on 0800 262958
- Price: **£280**
- Release date: **on sale now**

The key thing to consider, if you are thinking of buying the Sharp MD-MS722H, is can you live with its looks? It's certainly striking, but while some folk around here thought that it looked impressively techy, others reckoned it was merely clunky. On the plus side, though, all those buttons and the big jog dial do make recording, editing and naming tracks a doddle. For playback, it also has a nice G-Shock-style backlit remote, complete with a "hold" function to stop you accidentally knocking it and pumping up the volume to an ear-splitting level (or whatever). The sound's pretty darn good, although it can get a bit stroppy at high volume, but you do get a three-level Bass Boost function if you're looking for a bit more kick. At 220 grammes and with an optimum battery life of 16 hours continuous play (using the supplied rechargeable battery, plus a single AA in the bolt-on battery pack), it's certainly worth a look. ★★★★★



MDC-3100F

- Available from: **Sanyo** on 01923 246363
- Price: **£300**
- Release date: **on sale now**

This one's a bit different – it's not a personal MD recorder at all, but a fully-fledged ghetto blaster incorporating CD, tuner, MiniDisc and cassette. Quite why you'd want both cassette and MD in one unit isn't clear – presumably Sanyo reckons people are really quite attached to their old Sasha mix tapes and won't want to give them up.

There's plenty of scope for including lots of buttons without overcrowding, so in terms of ease of use it's excellent. You also get a proper, grown-up remote control. Soundwise, there has to be a payoff for getting all these formats in one box: we've heard better, but for a £300 boombox we've heard a lot worse as well. You also get four DSP modes and a four-level Bass Xpander. It's mains-only, so its portability is limited, especially as it weighs in at 5.9kg. ★★★



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So you're skint after Christmas? Dig out those coppers granny dropped down the sofa and head to the sales with the A-list. It's your exhaustive guide to every (and we mean every) game currently on sale.

What to look for in the comprehensive A-list this issue:

153 Ice ice baby

The top five ice hockey games reviewed and rated.

154 How I lost my friends

The sad, sad story of how Mark Green lost his mates – all because of *Gauntlet II*.

156 Wave Race 64

Sink or swim – long-term test of the N64 splash-fest.

158 Like the plague...

Games to avoid – this month a look at the unfortunate *Montezuma's Return*.

151 PlayStation games

Over 130 games reviewed for Britain's top console.

155 PC games

More than 100 of the latest PC releases rated.

158 Nintendo 64 games

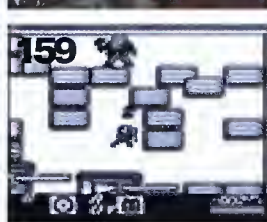
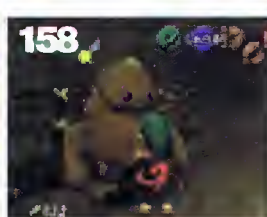
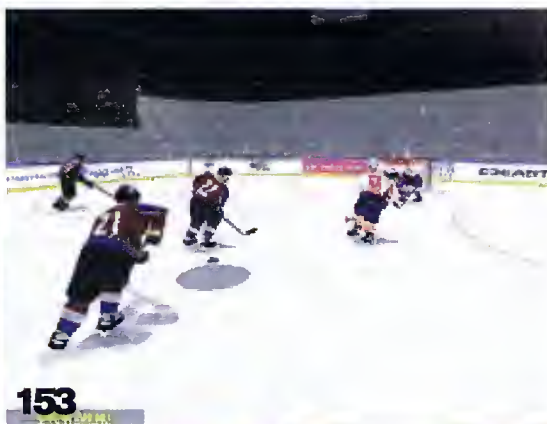
Some of our favourites.

159 Game Boy games

For gaming on the move.

Star ratings

- ★★★★★ Simply the best. A game you really should try.
- ★★★★ Excellent. Definitely worth your money.
- ★★★ Good stuff. Not exactly a world beater, but fine within its genre.
- ★★ Strictly average. We say: don't buy it.
- ★ Really bad news. Avoid at all costs.



PlayStation



Actua Golf 3
■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■
Gremlin Interactive Time for
tee Tee up with eight courses, a
variety of one-player and multi-
player tournaments, and some
lovingly crafted scenery. *Actua Golf*
3 doesn't offer anything new over
other golf games, but the slickness
of it all, and Peter Allis' wonderful
commentary, brings it in well under
par. ★★★★★

Actua Ice Hockey
■ Sports ■ 1-2 players
■ Gremlin Interactive
Minority sport for
psychopaths Surprisingly slow
and unresponsive, but *Actua Ice*
Hockey's saving grace is its easy-
to-pick-up control system. You'll
have players bouncing off the ice
in no time. ★★★
Or try: **Wayne Gretzky's**
Hockey ■ 1-2 players ■ GT
Interactive ■ 3D graphics, but
strictly 1D long-term appeal. ★★
(Turn to page 153 for more about
out favourite ice hockey games)

Actua Soccer 3
■ Sports ■ 1-2 players ■
Gremlin Pigs bladder kick-a-
thon Pleasingly difficult and
wonderfully fluid, *Actua Soccer 3*
produces passes, long balls and
bicycle kicks that flow together
like a well-oiled Brazilian back-four.
Only let down by the lack of
special moves and occasionally
ropey animation, but otherwise a
solid – if largely unimproved –
sequel. ★★★★★

Alien Trilogy
■ First-person shooter
■ 1-4 players ■ Acclaim
Entertainment ■ Platinum
Doom-style antics with
Ripley and "friends" General
monotony and aliens that look like
they might fall apart at any minute
(but are actually far too difficult to
kill) make this a lot less scary than
the movies. ★★

All Star Tennis '99
■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■
Ubisoft Ball, net, bat thing,
and all the rest Not *Smash*
Court-style comedy tennis, but
a more serious recreation of
Herman's hobby. It's nippy, and
there's a decent range of shots,
but the camera obscures things
and helps to make the one-player
game frustratingly difficult. Stick to
the friend-thrashing multi-player
and the brilliantly inventive "bomb
tennis" sub-game, and you'll be
happy you came. ★★
Or try: **Tennis Arena** ■ 1-2
players ■ Ubisoft ■ Comedy
tennis antics. ★★

PlayStation



Alundra

■ **RPG** ■ 1 player ■ **Psygnosis**
Old-style RPG An absorbing plot and an enticing arcadey feel which harks back to the days of *Zelda*. With gorgeous graphics and addictive gameplay, the emphasis is as much about moving and jumping as on solving the difficult but logical puzzles. ★★★★★
Or try: *Azure Dreams*
 ■ 1 player ■ Konami ■ Conquer the ever-changing tower. ★★★

Apocalypse

■ **Shoot-'em-up** ■ 1 player ■ **n Activision**
Bruce Willis and some guns Demi's hubby doesn't feature much except in the FMV, unless you catch sight of his face hilariously pasted on to a polygon body. But this is still a big, bold, futuristic shooter with a decent learning curve and not too many puzzles to interrupt the action. The controls and camera make things tricky, but otherwise it's solid, violent fun. ★★★

Arcade's Greatest Hits: The Atari Collection 2

■ **Retro** ■ 1-4 players
 ■ **Midway** **Nothing to do with us, fortunately** *Millipede*, *Road Blasters*, *Crystal Castles*, *Marble Madness*, *Paperboy* and *Gauntlet*, in increasing order of importance. Unfortunately, none of them – not even the eminent *Gauntlet* – holds up well in an age when you need massive breasts to become a gaming legend. ★★
Or try: *Namco Museum 1*
 ■ 1 player ■ Namco ■ Galaga, Pac-Man, Pole Position, Rally X. ★★

Assault

■ **Shooter** ■ 1-2 players
 ■ **Telstar** **Old-school blasting action** Take a chunk of *Contra* on the SNES, add 3D, plentiful power-ups, bosses and eye-torturing effects has brought it up to date for '90s kids. It's still (repetitive) fun, but as a 20-year-old game with few actual improvements, it's also showing its age. ★★

Asteroids

■ **Shooter** ■ 1-2 players ■ **Syrox** **Retro rock-blasting returns** Shoot, fly, shoot some more – the original concept hasn't changed, but a dollop of power-ups, bosses and eye-torturing effects has brought it up to date for '90s kids. It's still (repetitive) fun, but as a 20-year-old game with few actual improvements, it's also showing its age. ★★

B-Movie

■ **Shooter** ■ 1 player ■ **GT Interactive** **'90s-style shoot-the-aliens game** An amusing shoot-'em-up with a mission-based slant and cartoony graphics. The ability to improve your ship over time is great, but the controls and levels conspire to make life far too much of a hassle. ★★



Battle Arena Toshinden 3

■ **Fighting** ■ 1-2 players

■ **SCEE** **The crazy old men return** A high for the *Toshinden* series, though still eclipsed by the shadow of *Tekken*. Improvements over the original are obvious, but it's limited in every respect when compared to the Big T. ★★
Or try: *Battle Arena Toshinden 2* ■ 1-2 players ■ SCEE
 ■ More of the same. ★★

Bloody Roar

■ **Fighting** ■ 1-2 players
 ■ **Hudson** **3D beat-'em-up with added animal magic** Limited moves, but what you get is very quick and smooth. Set apart by both its style and the ability of its fighters to change into various animal forms – nothing new if you remember TV's *Manimal*. ★★
Or try: *Cardinal Syn* ■ 1-2 players ■ SCEE ■ Beat-'em-up that dispenses with fair play. ★★

Bombberman World

■ **Puzzler** ■ 1-5 players
 ■ **Sony/Hudsonsoft** **Bomber bloke's debut on PSX** When Hudsonsoft suggested that it was going to turn the 2D *Bombberman* mazes isometric, the whole world screamed. The conversion's here, and in one-player mode offers endless tedious mazes that only differ in speed and boss size, with nothing new offered over the first *Bombberman*. Inevitably, however, the multi-player is ridiculously addictive. ★★

Breath of Fire III

■ **RPG** ■ 1 player ■ **Virgin Interactive Entertainment** **Turn-based isometric role-player** A genuinely interesting story-line (all about combining genes to give dragons special powers) and a host of characters you'll care about, combine to make this genuinely involving, while the rotatable isometric perspective is neat. The pace gets a bit ploddy at times, though. ★★

Brian Lara Cricket

■ **Sports** ■ 1-4 players ■ **Codemasters** **Leather-on-willow simulator** This cricket sim is so realistic that you know it's your fault when you're losing. It's painfully hard hard the time (literally – batting is much easier than bowling), but this is surprisingly playable and very well-crafted, with the commentary and graphics in particular standing out. ★★



Bushido Blade

■ **Fighting** ■ 1-2 players
 ■ **Sony** **Pugilism for purists** Using trad weapons, and with characters who drop to the floor after just one hit, this is the beat-'em-up for purists. After other, more cartoony, scrappers it takes time to adjust to fighting this way (and even longer to become truly proficient) but there are rewards aplenty if you persevere. ★★

Bust-A-Move 4

■ **Puzzler** ■ 1-2 players
 ■ **Taito** **Bubble-bursting brilliance** In this puzzle, the aim is to match coloured bubbles, and it's as easy to pick up and painfully addictive to play as in previous versions, especially in two-player. The new bubble-link feature makes for faster and more frenetic play, and the story mode levels bring in some novel additions, too. Don't bother if you already own a version, though. ★★
Or try: *Bust-A-Move 2* ■ 1-2 players ■ Acclaim ■ You'll forget sleep exists! ★★

Chessmaster 3D

■ **Puzzler** ■ 1 player ■ **Mindscape** **If you want PSX chess, it's your only option** More expensive than a real chess board, but cheaper than Big Blue, this isn't the best-presented game in the world. Still, it's laden with skill levels and options. ★★

Circuit Breakers

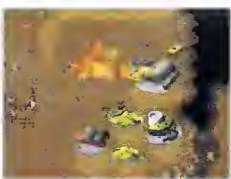
■ **Racing** ■ 1-4 players
 ■ **Mindscape** **Mario Kart + Micro Machines = not quite as good as either** The varied courses and a decent helping of speed add up to a fine comedy racer. The multi-player game will have you waking the neighbours with boisterous swearing, such is the range of weapons and tactics involved. ★★

Colin McRae Rally

■ **Racing** ■ 1-2 players
 ■ **Codemasters** **Only his Mum's ever heard of him** A departure from the usual racing game, with time and damage your only opponents. The variety of terrain and responsive controls give a real feeling of driving feedback – it's gratifying to see a racer that can compete with GT. ★★

Colony Wars: Vengeance

■ **Space shooter** ■ 1 player ■ **Psygnosis** **Epic space battles, in space** Looking absolutely gorgeous, this great sequel takes your spaceship through a variety of missions and all-out explosive battles. It's off-puttingly methodical, but it provides enough realistic space combat to make *Star Wars* fans wet their pants. ★★
Or try: *Blast Radius* ■ 1-2 players ■ Psygnosis ■ Space mission flying antics. ★★



Command & Conquer

■ **Strategy** ■ 1 player
 ■ **Virgin Interactive Entertainment** ■ **Platinum**
The original real-time war simulator Manage all your resources and send men to their deaths. It's extremely popular, solid and involving, but it's starting to date. The design of the levels and speed of the action make it a bit of a bargain. ★★
Or try: *Z* ■ 1 player ■ SCEE
 ■ Robotic action strategy. ★★

Command & Conquer: Red Alert

■ **Strategy** ■ 1 player
 ■ **Virgin Interactive Entertainment** **And again...** The strategy sequel with improved graphics and a great link-up game. If you don't come to the massacre with a mouse, then knock a star off the score, but otherwise this is a very fine game with a massive number of missions. ★★
Or try: *Command & Conquer: Retaliation* ■ 1-2 players ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment ■ An update of *Red Alert*. ★★

Constructor

■ **Strategy** ■ 1 player ■ **Acclaim** **Build an urban empire** Feels like *Sim City*, but where else do you get the chance to control a sweaty builder rather than the city mayor? Pointing and clicking to build up houses while keeping your tenants happy is comfortably challenging, and there's also a host of interesting enemies, rivals and mad hippie-types to contend with. Complex, comprehensive and cool. ★★

Cool Boarders 3

■ **Racing** ■ 1-2 player ■ **SCEE**
Snowboarding fun all over again With a hefty collection of tracks, characters and boards, and looking a good deal better than previous episodes, PlayStation snow-fans should get their shivery little hands on this one. Smooth controls make careering down the trick and speed courses a breeze, and it's only let down by the iffy collision detection. ★★
Or try: *Cool Boarders 2* ■ 1-2 players ■ SCEE ■ Snowboarding for the masses. ★★

Crash Bandicoot 2

■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player
 ■ **SCEE** **Pseudo-3D antics, again** Far better looking than the original, and with slightly more to do, but the level formats haven't been changed significantly and it's quick to finish. ★★
Or try: *Croc* ■ 1 player ■ Fox Interactive ■ Lacklustre 3D crocodile adventure. ★★

Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped

■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player ■ **SCEE** **More maniacal marsupial merriment** *Crash* has gained some slow dinosaur-riding sections and a girlfriend who he lets you control, but otherwise this third version is just another crazed 3D race in and out of the screen. This time though, *Crash 3* has become the PSX's best platformer, thanks to the breathtakingly atmospheric worlds, and a longevity ensured by the host of time-challenges, bosses and secret levels. ★★
Or try: *Crash Bandicoot* ■ 1 player ■ SCEE ■ Platinum
 ■ The first round of 3D antics with a mad marsupial. ★★

Crime Killer

■ **Racing/shooter** ■ 1-2 players ■ **Interplay** **Fuzz of the future** A mission-based shooter. Hunt "Burning Epoch" terrorists using the armed bikes, cars and wings at your disposal. It's fast, with good graphics, but constantly ranges in difficulty. And when it's difficult it's very difficult. The two-player option seems a bit tagged on, too. ★★
Or try: *Felony 11-79* ■ 1 player ■ ASCII ■ Short-term driving mayhem. ★★

Dead Ball Zone

■ **Sports** ■ 1-2 players
 ■ **GT Interactive** **Rugby for space-age sadists** An attempt to update the sadly ageing classic *Speedball* for today's violence-eager audience. There's plenty of blood and vomit, but the stupidly fast play, a ball that's too difficult to see and the clueless drunken computer players mean it never flows properly. ★★

Dead or Alive

■ **Fighting** ■ 1-2 players
 ■ **SCEE** **Slick beat-'em-up** Barren-looking but with quick-as-you-like visuals, this makes for a slick deviation from *Tekken*-style fighting through its clever use of counter-attacks, and an emphasis on chucking people up in the air. Sadly, though, *Dead or Alive* is only really distinguished from the horde by its tragic "bouncing breasts" option. ★★



Destruction Derby

■ **Racing** ■ 1-2 players
 ■ **Psygnosis** ■ **Platinum**
Early PlayStation racing Buy

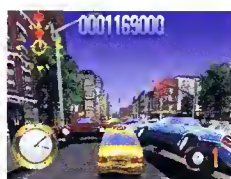
this, and you'll be staring into space wondering why for several hours each day. The small, poorly designed tracks mean there's very little fun to be had. Head straight to the sequel. ★★

Destruction Derby 2

■ **Racing** ■ 1 player
 ■ **Psygnosis** ■ **Platinum**
Smashing sequel Making good on almost all of the faults of the original, this sequel is incredibly fast, includes varied well-designed tracks, and offers more crashes than your average PC. And it's a mere 20 quid, too. ★★

Diablo

■ **RPG** ■ 1-2 players
 ■ **Electronic Arts** **Goblins and sorcerers in old-school role-playing** Far too simple, with little to do except wander around medieval environments, engaging in both unimaginative fighting and chatting. The controls and graphics haven't had an easy transition to the PlayStation, but the innovative co-operative two-player game and random map generator pull it from the brink. ★★



Die Hard Trilogy

■ **Shooter/racing** ■ 1 player
 ■ **Electronic Arts** ■ **Platinum**
Three games in one Excellent value for money, this triple bundle includes a *Tomb Raider*-style shooter, a *Time Crisis*-like and a driving game. Obvious effort has been expended on each part, both in the graphics and gameplay, and the three are difficult enough to last you for ages. ★★



Doom

■ **First-person shooter** ■ 1-2 players ■ **GT Interactive**
In the beginning... Superb conversion of id's breakthrough first-person shooter. The minor fact that the graphics are already years out of date merely enables the excellent level design and the simplistic gameplay to shine. Every home should have one. ★★
Or try: *Star Wars: Dark Forces* ■ 1 player ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment ■ Shoot-'em-up with Stormtroopers. ★★

Duke Nukem

■ **First-person shooter** ■ 1 player ■ **GT Interactive**
"You want some?" An outrageously bad-taste first-person shooter, starring a crazed psychopath, numerous topless lovelies and several toilets. Strong gameplay, and with levels that are ingeniously designed around real-life locales, but it's all looking a bit dated already. ★★
Or try: *One* ■ 1 player ■ ASC Games ■ Slick graphics, big guns. ★★

Everybody's Golf

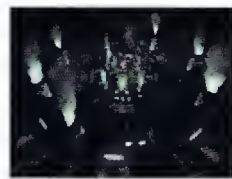
■ **Sports** ■ 1-4 players
 ■ **SCEE** **Cartoon-style stick-and-ball antics** Simplistic looks but complex gameplay, with an arcade slant that injects more speed and a host of secrets to earn. Buy *Actua Golf* if you want realistic simulation, but this one's great if you don't take your golf

too seriously. ★★

Or try: *Konami Open Golf* ■ 1-2 players ■ Konami
 ■ One-course arcade stuff. ★★

FIFA 99

■ **Sports** ■ 1-2 players ■ **EA Sports** **Long-running official footy update** It's got the license, it's packed with visual frills and it's nipper than a Liverpoolian striker. But while *FIFA* is simplistic enough to cater for the lightweights who find *ISS Pro* too demanding, scoring multiple goals is far too easy and there's the feeling that the programmers just don't care about football. ★★



Final Fantasy VII

■ **RPG** ■ 1 player ■ **SCEE**
150 hours of truly epic adventure Quite incredible cut-scenes that mix seamlessly with the moving characters, exciting conflicts and a story-line that will have you emotionally involved throughout. The random battles and linear nature are minor faults, but otherwise, it's a near-perfect adventure experience. ★★

Formula 1'98

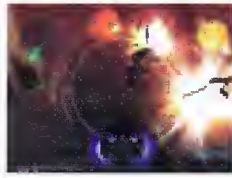
■ **Racing** ■ 1-4 players
 ■ **Psygnosis** **Purportedly accurate driving sim** In an astonishing climb-down from the previous two incarnations, this is saddled with a ton of pop-up, inadequate views that prevent you from seeing far enough ahead and horrendous handling. The wealth of options and feeling of realism save it a little, but not enough. ★★
Or try: *Formula 1'97* ■ 1-2 players ■ Psygnosis ■ Vrooom... ★★

Forsaken

■ **First-person shooter** ■ 1-2 players ■ **Acclaim Entertainment** **Blat bikers away** Battle to the death in a mad scramble to gain the last resources of a condemned planet in this very tough tunnel-based hovercraft shoot-'em-up. The controls are tricky, but the sheer look of the thing will keep you persevering. ★★
Or try: *Tunnel B1* ■ 1 player ■ Ocean ■ Fast and claustrophobic. ★★

G Darius

■ **Shooter** ■ 1-2 players
 ■ **THQ** **Updated 2D shooter** 15 levels, arranged so that you have a choice of route, don't make this game any easier, or any less monotonous. It's action-packed for shooting fans and the great "attack enemy ship to use their weapons" concept is nifty, but with so many enemies on screen you risk brain bleed. ★★



G-Police

■ **Shooter** ■ 1 player
 ■ **Psygnosis** **You are the law** Mission-based shoot-'em-up, with plenty of variety and a series of interesting world layouts set in domed cities. Initially as easy to control as a three-year-old in a supermarket, but stick with it and a compulsive experience emerges, especially as it manages to slip

some strategy elements in while you're not looking. ★★★★★

Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko

■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player
■ **Take 2 Interactive Lizard-lover's platformer** It's after Mario's crown, but Gex doesn't feel as free-roaming as the Big M. You do have 125 moves at your disposal, and the level design is almost as good as Nintendo's. It's a barrel of fun, but thanks to its appalling sense of humour, not a barrel of laughs. ★★★★★

Grand Theft Auto

■ **Joy riding** ■ 1 player
■ **BMG Interactive**
■ **Controversy aho!** The shoddy graphics and poor speed affect the central appeal of kicking in civilians and driving whatever vehicle you care to purloin, but this is still an involving crim-em-up. Just don't look at the graphics on the PC version, unless you want to be made green with envy. ★★★★★

Gran Turismo

■ **Racing** ■ 1-2 players
■ **SCEE Probably the best racing game in the world** Take one measure of outrageous good graphics and near-perfect handling, throw in immediacy of play and limitless levels of depth, add a dash of replay mode, and you've a pleasure pie that can't be missed. A masterpiece. ★★★★★

Heart of Darkness

■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player
■ **Ocean Long-awaited 2D adventure** Four years out of date, this Gallic epic about a boy and his dog is frustratingly difficult, despite hints thrown up at various points, and descends into trial-and-error on too many occasions. It's saved by its size, though. ★★
■ **Or try: Hercules** ■ 1 player
■ **Electronic Arts** ■ SNES-style cartoon platformer. ★★

Invasion

■ **Shoot-em-up** ■ 1 player
■ **Microids Back-to-basics shooter** Although the mission-

based structure makes things a bit more exciting, this is the most run-of-the-mill shooter ever to grace our grey friend. The levels are nice, the weapons are okay, the baddies are fine, but it's all very forgettable. A real John Major of a game. ★★



ISS Pro '98

■ **Sports** ■ 1-4 players
■ **Konami The best football game in the world** Konami sticks one up its desperate licence-toting rivals by beautifully honing its original killer title. Playability is smoother, tactics more subtle, graphics more well realised, goal-scoring more rewarding and that through-pass will send shivers of ecstasy along your spine. Plus Tony Gubba's commentary is oddly soothing. ★★★★★
■ **Or try: Kick Off '97** ■ 1-2 players
■ **Maxis** ■ There's no prize for second place. ★★

Knockout Kings

■ **Sports** ■ 1-2 players ■ **EA Sports Boxing very clever** Very much a simulation of punch-upper, with a powerbar system to make sure you don't just stab the "hit" button until your opponent falls. There's plenty of modes, a create-a-player section and you can meet a virtual Muhammad Ali at the end. Cripes! ★★★★★



Kula World

■ **Puzzler** ■ 1-2 players

■ **SCEE Indecently addictive puzzler** Ball-rolling-impossibly-on-a-floating-maze game. Hard to get into, but once you're sucked in you'll be hooked, mostly because of the well-designed controls and head-scratching levels. ★★★★★
■ **Or try: Kurushi** ■ 1-2 players
■ **SCEE** ■ Mind-twisting block-shifting. ★★

Lemmings

■ **Puzzler** ■ 1 player
■ **Psygnosis Save multiple midgets from hideous death** The latest instalment of this long-running series steps back to the roots of the crazy little 2D suicidal maniacs. Click on little men to help them avoid traps and get safely home, scream at the screen in frustration and find it impossible to stop playing. Still, it's all looking very dated. ★★

Libero Grande

■ **Sports** ■ 1-2 players
■ **Namco Football starring the individual** Commendably original – you control just one player throughout the entire match – but, sadly Libero is glitchy and tedious. Your star player is lucky if he finds the ball at his feet twice per half, while the rest of your team are content to run blindly toward the goal and try to barge past the keeper. Nice try, but no cigar. ★★

Loaded

■ **Shooter** ■ 1 player
■ **Gremlin Interactive**
■ **Platinum Mass murder quest** Starring a whole series of unhinged nutters, this bloke-bloodbath has no pretensions about being anything other than mindless shooting, complete with gore-splattering explosions and weapons that would make Arnie blush. It's very difficult to see what's going on and the sheer number of similar mazes will have you very bored, very quickly. ★★

Megaman Legends

■ **RPG** ■ 1 player ■ **Virgin Interactive RPG – Japanese style** The long-awaited 3D

update of Megaman's '80s platform/shooting adventures. The addition of an RPG element has provided some depth, but the repetitive nature of the game – travelling around destroying big robot after big robot – could put you off. ★★

Michael Owen's World League Soccer '99

■ **Sports** ■ 1-2 players
■ **EIDOS Not taking the Michael** Ooh, this looks bad, but you'd be hard pushed to fault it otherwise, because it plays like a dream. The finest details of footy have been recreated with the Liverpoolian Boy Wonder in a starring role, and the intuitive controls, sexy combos and realistic difficulty level make this a fine interpretation. ★★★★★

Micro Machines V3

■ **Racing** ■ 1-8 players
■ **Codemasters Platinum**
■ **Tiny cars race around your living room** The old 2D game souped up into pseudo-3D for a modern audience, and it's a beauty. There are 30 innovative courses, based on kitchen tables and school desks, coupled with a multi-player game that's just beautifully designed and great overhead camera. And all of this for just 20 quid? We must be dreaming. ★★★★★
■ **Or try: Motor Mash** ■ 1-4 players
■ **Ocean** ■ Old idea with a new twist. ★

Mortal Kombat 4

■ **Fighting** ■ 1-2 players
■ **GT Interactive "Come and 'ave a go if you think..."** Although in 3D, this fails to take advantage of the extra dimension, thus boiling down to the same old tedious MK features again and again. The controls and characters look incredibly over-familiar, and it's not a patch on Tekken 3. Strictly for fans of the series. ★★
■ **Or try: Mortal Kombat Trilogy** ■ 1-2 players
■ **GT Interactive** ■ Everything from the previous three. ★★

Mr Domino

■ **Puzzler** ■ 1 player ■ **JVC Does exactly what it says on the tin** A PSX version of those Record Breakers-style domino-topping events, with a central character cursed with the inability to stop walking. Work out what's going on, and this gets addictive, but it suffers from that typically Japanese too-easy feel. ★★

Music: Music Creation for the PlayStation

■ **Music creation** ■ 1 player
■ **Codemasters Custom-build your very own techno** Create your own tunes and a psychedelic polygon video to go with them, using a system of manipulating little chunks of music and video. This fulfils its purpose – enabling anyone to create pumping dance – but it's too difficult for novices and too insulting for more professional deck-spinners. ★★
■ **Or try: Fluid** ■ Music ■ 1 player
■ **SCEE** ■ Interactive aquatic music. ★★



N20

■ **Shooter** ■ 1-2 players
■ **Gremlin Interactive Old-style shooter** Traditional shoot-em-up, set in futuristic tunnels, and more on-rails than Gremlin would have you believe. It feels similar to Tempest and is good fun in a retro sense, but despite its addictive powers, it's just not that exciting. ★★

NBA Live 99

■ **Sports** ■ 1-8 players ■ **EA Sports That's a slam-dunk!** Silky motion capture, proper gurning faces, and Simulation and Arcade modes to satisfy proper basketball fans and normal people alike. With a massive number of

stats, a wodge of tactical plays and the now-obligatory create-a-player mode, this should keep Rodman fans quiet all day. ★★★★★

■ **Or try: NBA Hangtime** ■ 1-4 players
■ **GT Interactive** ■ Very competent but uninspired. ★★

Need for Speed 3

■ **Racing** ■ 1-2 players ■ **EA Sports I feel the need...** Plenty of modes to make the game last longer, great graphics and a good sense of speed lucky, what with the name and everything). The chance to leg it from the police and the two-player mode make this the best NFS so far, but it has been overtaken on the inside by Gran Turismo. ★★★★★
■ **Or try: Test Drive 4** ■ 1-2 players
■ **EA Sports** ■ Smooth graphics, neat tracks, intuitive controls. ★★★★★

NFL Blitz

■ **Sports** ■ 1-2 players ■ **GT Interactive US footy simplified and made fun** Departing from the usual American football style (overloading on rules and stopping for a rest every other minute) and moving to something more worthwhile (emphasis on speed, simple controls, usage of fists), this is top fun. It's slightly repetitive and looks glitchy, but that's easy to forgive. ★★★★★
■ **Or try: NFL Extreme** ■ 1-4 players
■ **SCEE** ■ US footy simplified and made dull. ★★

NHL '99

■ **Sports** ■ 1-2 players
■ **Electronic Arts Ice hockey for mother puckers** Intelligent team-mates and all the stats you'll need aren't enough to save this disappointing take on the sadist's favourite sport. The puck finds itself in the net for most of the game, at the expense of proper action. ★★
■ **Or try: NHL Powerplay '98** ■ 1-2 players
■ **Virgin** ■ Sturdy but slow. ★★

Ninja: Shadow of Darkness

■ **Action adventure** ■ 1 player ■ **EIDOS**

FIVE OF THE BEST

The ice is right

Brrrr! Nippy out, isn't it? The perfect conditions in which to pick the best ice hockey game ever.



1. NHL 98

■ **PC** ■ **Electronic Arts**
EA's puck extravaganza pulls off the speed and fluidity of ice hockey without sacrificing player involvement. The other computer opponents are consummate professionals, and it looks lovely, with the 3Dfx-aided hi-res and realistically ugly player faces making for games worthy of late-night CS coverage.



2. Wayne Gretsky's 3D Hockey

■ **PlayStation/N64** ■ **GT Interactive**
Obviously not as good looking as EA's number one, and you wouldn't know who Mr Gretsky was if he didn't have a game named after him. The arcade nature and the sheer speed of play (in the style of the NBA Jam and NFL Blitz series) make for exciting games, and there's a dugout-full of options to ensure that your time with Wayne is time well spent. It manages to be pleasingly tricky, too.

3. NHL Breakaway '98

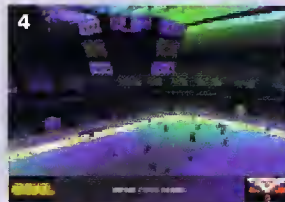
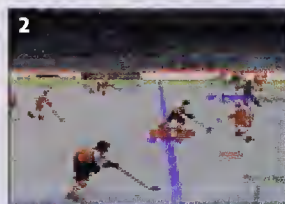
■ **PlayStation/N64** ■ **Acclaim Entertainment**
As we travel down the table, the graphics start to feel roper, the controls become less intuitive and the feeling that you're truly in control of the fast-paced action diminishes. The game is still as quick as it should be, the ice-bound computer opposition is sufficiently intelligent and the repetitive organ strikes up a good tune. Somehow, though Breakaway just doesn't feel right.

4. Actua Ice Hockey

■ **PlayStation/PC** ■ **Gremlin**
Certainly lives up to its "Actua" label, with a weird ice-clearing automaton putting in a mid-match appearance, and the ref skating about as only he can. But while the controls are simplistic and easy to use, there's a general lack of depth and speed, and your opponents seem to dispense with fair play in favour of just out-and-out cheating. The all-important fights are disappointingly non-interactive, too.

5. NHL Faceoff '99

■ **PlayStation** ■ **SCEE**
This is the fifth-best ice hockey sim, and its general averageness highlights just how few great ice hockey games there are available. Faceoff flows smoothly enough, but there's a lack of challenge from the weedy AI opponents, and the in-game tactics and moves are too difficult to pull off. A last-resort purchase.



PlayStation

Interactive Here comes the man in black... A great range of punches, kicks and magic, coupled with a decent amount of switch-finding and the like, make this enjoyable enough. But, sadly, the odd camera system spoils the lovely graphics, and overall, the game is horribly difficult. ★★
Or try: Soviet Strike ■ 1 player ■ EA Classics ■ Platinum ■ More of the same. ★★

Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus ■ Puzzle ■ 1-2 players ■ GT ■ **Interactive Puzzly platform game with agile alien** Wander through screens of 2D platforms and rescue your friends, solving puzzles along the way. Often infuriating rather than tricky, but with a host of neat touches and graphics good enough to frame, this is a long-lasting and enjoyable challenge. ★★ ★★
Or try: Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee ■ 1 player ■ GT ■ Platinum ■ Save cute-but-ugly alien from the meat factory. ★★ ★★

ODT Platformer ■ 1 player ■ **Psygnosis Disappointing third-person adventure thing** The first real *Tomb Raider* done, with a sizeable slice of RPG chucked in and one-move-and-you're-dead tricks and traps. The sprawling levels promise much, but the controls are dreadful and the whole experience is too difficult to extract any fun from. ★★

Pandemonium 2 ■ Platformer ■ 1 player ■ BMG Interactive ■ **It's chaos**

in there Crystal Dynamics didn't take criticism of the original on board, and the augmented breasts of female lead Nikki are the only change here. *Pandemonium 2* still suffers from basic platform sins (like the leap of faith), and the lack of challenge and appalling camera will make you cry. ★★
Or try: Pandemonium ■ 1 player ■ BMG Interactive ■ Platinum ■ Two sorcerer's apprentices jump about. ★★ ★



PaRappa the Rapper ■ Rapping ■ 1 player ■ SCE ■ **Puppy love songs** It's time to join the rapping dog with "attitude". A selection of fantastic tunes make this brilliantly funny and completely original. Rap "Good" and you're sure to finish PaRappa in an afternoon, but this said, it's still something you should have a lot of fun with. ★★ ★★

Point Blank ■ Light-gun shooter ■ 1-4 players ■ Namco ■ **Grab your gun** Only the Japanese could create a shooting gallery featuring ninjas and piranhas, stick in a four-player mode and still make it one of the most weirdly addictive gameplay experiences this side of *Time Crisis*. ★★ ★★
Or try: Crypt Killer ■ 1 player ■ Konami ■ Poor-man's light-gun fight. ★

Pool Shark ■ Sports ■ 1-2 player

Gremlin A game "baized" on the popular sport Almost identical to other snooker sims, the graphics are okay, but it inexplicably replaces the customisable power bar with some golf-style click-at-the-right-moment nonsense. And is playing snooker on your own actually all that much fun? The answer is no, fact fans. ★★

Premier Manager '98 ■ Sports management ■ 1-4 players ■ Gremlin ■ **Interactive Football management for everyone** It's the most comprehensive simulation this side of Ruud's office, and yet it's also clearly presented and easy to understand. Would-be Hoddles (if there be any) will enjoy months of re-creating England's various spectacular World Cup crash-outs. ★★ ★★

Psybadek ■ Racer ■ 1 player ■ **Psygnosis Cute snowboarder platformer** Put platforming and snowboarding in the same pot and you get this; a curious hotch-potch of racing, shooting and jumping sub-games that doesn't really work. The controls are horrendous, the board unresponsive and the camera controls a joke. It might be varied, but it's far too difficult and ultimately pointless. ★★

Rage Racer ■ Racing ■ 1 player ■ Namco ■ **Arcade racing in your house** The third *Ridge Racer* is speedy, moodily good looking and option-laden. This is the definitive racer if you like your cars a bit more "Woah-woah-woooooahhh!" than *Gran Turismo*. Let down only by the lack of a split-screen option. ★★ ★★
Or try: Peak Performance ■ 1 player ■ Electronic Arts ■ Great editing, poor driving. ★

Rampage World Tour ■ Smash-'em-up ■ 1 player ■ **GT Interactive Old-school bizzaro building-smasher** An attempt to bring a very old arcade game up to date for a '90s audience. It was original and fun at the time, but now it falls at the first hurdle by being too simplistic, too easy and looking very poor indeed. Check out the three massive monsters, though. ★

Rapid Racer ■ Racing ■ 1-2 players ■ SCE ■ **Powerboat racing** The random "track" generator is a good inclusion, and the hi-res visuals will undoubtedly make jaws drop, but the handling and lack of realism causes it to sink slowly and gracefully to the bottom of the gaming ocean. ★★
Or try: Jet Rider 2 ■ 1-2 players ■ SCE ■ Haphazard water-bound fun. ★★

Resident Evil ■ Action adventure ■ 1 player ■ Capcom ■ **Boo!** A decent interactive movie at long last. Genuinely frightening and the first game to achieve a proper film-like anticipation of the next scene, aided in part by brilliantly poor acting. Detailed backgrounds and a great plot. Keep a clean pair of pants handy, kids! ★★ ★★
Or try: Clock Tower ■ 1 player ■ ASCII ■ Insanity, intrigue and ghastly Japanese murder. ★★

Resident Evil: Director's Cut ■ Action adventure ■ 1 player ■ Capcom ■ **Added value version of RE1, plus a demo of the sequel** Now that we have *RE2*, the significance of the demo here is diminishing, but if you still don't have the original, this is a nigh-on essential purchase. This is the Japanese version, so is bound to attract the hardcore gamer. ★★ ★★



Resident Evil 2 ■ Action adventure ■ 1 player ■ Capcom ■ **Scary sequel to the original gore-fest** The two-character feature is a touch gimmicky, and the puzzles are similar to the first incarnation, but *RE2* is better than the original in all other respects. The improved script and acting, and the wildly increased zombie count, will scare your skin off. ★★ ★★
Or try: The City of Lost Children ■ 1 player ■ Psygnosis ■ Fiddly, French. ★★

Ridge Racer Revolution ■ Racer ■ 1-2 players ■ Namco ■ **Platinum Fast car action** The definitive arcade racer. Looks absolutely beautiful, but it's the fantastic arcade-style handling and ridiculous speed that should have you racing over the three one-player tracks for quite unreasonable amounts of your life. The five-course two-player link-up mode finishes off an utterly brilliant package. ★★ ★★
Or try: Ridge Racer ■ 1 player ■ Namco ■ Platinum ■ Brilliant, but smoothly overtaken by *Revolution*. ★★ ★★

Rival Schools ■ Fighter ■ 1-2 players ■ Virgin Interactive ■ **Teachers and students take to the ring** Absolutely mad Grange Hill-style fighter, featuring rival high schools, with over-the-top moves

and a huge selection of modes and sub-games. It's not technically great, but it's a whole heap of fun, and its relative simplicity and easily pulled-off moves make it a good option if you usually steer clear of smack-'em-ups. ★★ ★★

Road Rash 3D ■ Racing ■ 1-6 players ■ Electronic Arts ■ **Manx TT meets WWF** With four nasty gangs to get involved in, this is the racer for people who like the look of bruises on a man. The racing is supplemented by smacking other riders about, but unfortunately the two don't balance well in practice. It's got speed, though, plenty of cool bikes to choose from and it's certainly a bit of a looker. ★★ ★

Rogue Trip ■ Shooter ■ 1-2 player ■ GT ■ **Interactive Bang-bang, boom-boom driving game** The "hilarious" taxi driver-based plot bears no relevance to the game and the variety of ways in which you can attack other cars are strangely unsatisfying. It's pretty, and the ability to shoot anything that moves (or doesn't move) is welcome, but spending half an hour destroying cars on each level is never liable to grip you in the right places. ★★

R-Types ■ Shooter ■ 1 player ■ Virgin Interactive ■ **Combo of classic scrolling shooters** Classic shooters *R-type* parts un et deux presented for your delectation; emulated rather than converted and therefore closer than close to the originals. The lovely level designs, the perfect power-ups and the sheer addictiveness of it all, squeezed into your little portable TV. Sweet. ★★ ★★

S.C.A.R.S ■ Racing ■ 1-4 players ■ Ubisoft ■ **Cute racer** A faithful attempt at a *Mario Kart* clone, but rather less immediate. It has a rather difficult control system that rewards patience, and greater deviations in style and handling between the individual vehicles, but the multi-player game option – *Mario's* strong point – is not nearly as enjoyable. ★★ ★

Small Soldiers ■ Platformer ■ 1-2 players ■ Electronic Arts ■ **Movie-based tin-men exploits** Despite the decent visuals and the responsive controls, simply running about and collecting objects isn't fun for long and you'll soon go back to playing with the cat. The deathmatch could have saved it, if it hadn't been a tedious hour-long runabout followed by a five-second random gun-fest. Tedious. ★★

Sentinel Returns ■ Strategy ■ 1-2 players ■ Psygnosis ■ **Classic '80s tactics** Your aim is to absorb the Sentinel, who sits on the highest point on the landscape, and the attempt has lost little in translation from 8-bit to PSX, especially as the graphics have all been kept deliberately low key to maintain the feel of the '80s original. Eerie, massive and – praise the Lord – a successful retro game. ★★ ★★



Soul Blade ■ Fighting ■ 1-2 players ■ Namco ■ **Platinum Take on Tekken** Similar to the *Tekken* series, with huge weapons, and

rather good. The graphics are top and the 3D moves will have your eyes popping out of your skull. As you're stabbed in the back with a humongous sword. ★★ ★★

Spawn: The Eternal ■ Action ■ 1 player ■ SCE ■ **Movie-based nonsense** Looking very similar to Lara Croft's infamous adventures, but lacking the excellent level design, depth of gameplay or graphics, *Spawn* tries to marry fighting and dungeon exploration, but there're no prizes for failing so miserably. ★

Spice World ■ Music/dancing ■ 1 player ■ SCE ■ **Platinum The fab five... er, four** Looking a little rushed, this is the chance you've waited for. Choreograph cartoon Spices to their own music. There are so few moves and rewards for success, that it's (inevitably) one for the fans, and liable to grate. Rather like the Girls themselves. ★

Spyro the Dragon ■ Platformer ■ 1 player ■ SCE ■ **Platforming with a camp dinosaur** Starring a purple My Little Pony/dinosaur hybrid, this gorgeous 3D platformer is partly aimed at the kids, as the initially simplistic and dull early levels demonstrate. But the dragon-rescuing missions and platforming theme are well-crafted, and the worlds are huuuge. ★★ ★★

Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha ■ Fighting ■ 1-2 players ■ Capcom ■ **Another in the beat-'em-up series** Conversion of the first 3D *SF* coin-op, with loads of extra bits. Excellent speed and good backgrounds, as well as pleasingly familiar moves and style, make it just as intuitive as its great predecessors. ★★ ★★
Or try: Marvel Super Heroes ■ 1-2 players ■ Capcom ■ 2D super hero combat. ★★ ★★
Also available: Street Fighter Collection ■ 1-2 players ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment ■ Missed opportunity for a history lesson. ★★ ★

Super Puzzle Fighter 2 ■ Puzzle ■ 1-2 players ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment ■ **Superb Tetris-style puzzling** Mix *Tetris* and *Bust-A-Move*, add some *Street Fighter* kiddie characters and you have one of the best puzzlers of all time. It's insanely addictive in two-player mode, but try one-player and you'll have the family banging on your door, wondering where you've been for the past month. ★★ ★★

Tekken 2 ■ Fighting ■ 1-2 players ■ Namco ■ **Round two... fight!** Again, it used to be the best beat-'em-up... until *Tekken 3* arrived. The character models wouldn't look out of place in a pre-rendered demo, the one-player game is totally engrossing (uncommon for a fighter) and there are plenty of moves, bosses and secrets to get your teeth into. ★★ ★★
Or try: Tekken ■ 1-2 players ■ Namco ■ Round one... fight! ★★ ★★



Tekken 3 ■ Fighting ■ 1-2 players ■ Namco ■ **Round Thr... oh, never mind** Here they are again.

THE GAME THAT RUINED MY LIFE

Throw away the Gauntlet

Top-down maze game *Gauntlet II* might be great in one-player, but it lost Mark Green his friends. Yes, both of them.

■ "Oh, come on." "Get a bloody move on." "Where are you going, you idiot?" As we sat in my bedroom, staring at the screen – our eyes filled with hatred and our hands trembling – my two mates and I wondered how a simple Amiga game could have wrought so much loathing. What had started as a fun little round of co-operative three-player *Gauntlet II* had descended into a hate triangle of epic proportions.

The trouble stemmed from the point when – by a cruel twist of fate – one of us was separated from the others. We were stood outside a complex maze, he was inside, and we just couldn't finish off the level until he was out. Our early efforts to be reunited began with good-natured jibes, but soon descended into infuriated shouts of



"Go that way!" and "What the hell are you doing?" By the time we got back together, it was too late. We played on, but a morbid silence enveloped the room, punctuated only by sound of the occasional insult through gritted

teeth. Whole hours passed with only the ticking of the clock and "Get out of the sodding way" to be heard, until my friends finally left the house with a muttered farewell. I often wonder what happened to them...

Similar to *Tekken 2*, but a major improvement in almost every way – graphically flawless and the new moves give something for both newcomers and veterans. There's so much to do, that it's almost the *Mario* of fighting games. But no cute stuff. ★★★★★

Or try: *Dynasty Warriors* ■ 1 player ■ Ocean ■ Gorgeous looking, but still no match for the *Tekken* series. ★★

Tenchu

Fighter ■ 1 player ■ **Action** *Lara Croft and the oriental arts combine*

Starring a bloke who gets about with the aid of a grappling hook, this hugely atmospheric kung-fu fighting/exploring game looks suspiciously similar to the *Tomb Raider* games. If the camera hadn't made things difficult and the graphics had been less glitchy, this could have been a five. ★★★★★

Test Drive 4x4

Racing ■ 1 player

■ **Electronic Arts** *Racing for the tedious* Six courses, five classes of car and a whole variety of environments to race about in should be adequate, but *4x4* looks terrible, and there's an inexplicable lack of speed. The incessant over-exercised commentary, coupled with flying up into the air at every bump, will ultimately get on your nerves. ★★

Or try: *Test Drive S* ■ 1-2 players ■ Electronic Arts ■ Driving again, then. ★★

The Lost World

■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player ■ **EA Classics** ■ **Platinum**

Prehistoric platforming piffle Whoever decided that Spielberg's dino-sequel was crying out for a pseudo-3D platform interpretation needs stomping on. The graphics are great, which makes controlling the assorted humans and dinosaurs mildly pleasurable, but it's chock-full of bugs, platform game sins and ropey levels. ★★

Theme Hospital

■ **Strategy** ■ 1 player ■ **Electronic Arts Medical** *resource management* More of a geriatric hospital these days, and the lack of PSX mouse control can make it a sod to play. It's okay, but this build-your-own-hospital-and-cure-diabolical-comedy-style-illnesses strategy is looking a little bit. Bloaty Head in today's age of *Command & Conquer* and *Warhammer*. ★★



Time Crisis

■ **Light-gun shooter** ■ 1 player ■ **Namco** *Go for your gun* The innovative "duck and reload" option is present, as is the G-Con 45 light gun. Both make for exciting, bloody and flowing play that relies on pure speed. With bonus levels as a reward for performance, don't worry about the longevity – just feel the power. ★★★★★

Or try: *Judge Dredd* ■ 1 player ■ Gremlin Interactive ■ Enjoyable 3D blaster. ★★

TOCA 2

Racing ■ 1-2 player

■ **Codemasters** *Yet more touring car mayhem* Sweet driving action with a garage-full of cars that all handle differently and embrace accurate driving physics (whatever that is). If it wasn't for its intense difficulty, this'd be the

perfect racer, with very accurate courses and speed, and a real smoothness that'll genuinely frighten you. Rev on! ★★★★★

Or try: *TOCA Touring Car* ■ 1 player ■ Codemasters ■ One of the first proper racing sims. ★★★★★

Tomb Raider

■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player ■ **EIDOS Interactive** *Indiana Jones meets Melinda*

Messenger It made Lara Croft a global icon and shoved many positive images of computer games into the mass media, but it was the excellent level design and atmosphere that sold the game. *Tomb Raider* wiped off some of *Mario*'s smile, and showed that a pretty face and great gameplay aren't mutually exclusive. ★★★★★

Or try: *Deathtrap Dungeon* ■ 1 player ■ EIDOS Interactive ■ Poor graphics and a worrying camera. ★★

Tomb Raider III

■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player ■ **EIDOS** *The bitch is back*

Hello, Lara. Back for a third time are you? I see you've brought a new hi-res mode and some more well-designed, good-looking levels for us to peruse. Oh, and you've made everything a lot more difficult, with some occasionally frustrating moments thanks to the controls and camera. But you know we still love you. ★★★★★

Or try: *Tomb Raider II* ■ 1 player ■ EIDOS Interactive ■ "Stop staring at my butt!" ★★★★★

Tombi

■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player ■ **SCEE** *Porcine platform power* Relying on secrets and level design to carry it through, rather than visuals or elaborate controls, *Tombi* works a treat. A series of innovative tasks to carry out throughout the game makes it part platformer, part RPG and a bit special. And the downside? Too much hammed-up acting. ★★

Total NBA '98

■ **Sports** ■ 1-8 players ■ **Sony** *Get in the hoop* A sim which requires a degree of real determination to both learn and succeed, thanks to intelligent computer-controlled opponents. A great create-a-player mode, a whole range of options and total control over your players mean that, once it's flowing, *Total NBA '98* is as addictive and beautiful to watch as the real thing (a subjective opinion, obviously). ★★★★★

Treasures of the Deep

■ **Adventure** ■ 1 player

■ **SCEE** *Underwater exploration* The lack of levels is compensated for by a sharply rising difficulty curve and a wide variety of both weapons and exploratory missions – from crashed jumbo jets to Aztec cities. The underwater aspect is a bit of a gimmick, though. ★★★★★

True Pinball

■ **Pinball** ■ 1 player ■ **Ocean**

■ **Platinum** *Flipping mad* One of the best pinball sims, but that doesn't make it an essential purchase unless you're too scared to go down the arcade. Across the four tables, the choice of 2D and 3D views doesn't help when the visuals are so poor, but the physics of the ball work well and there's the obligatory multi-ball and video displays. ★★

Vigilante 8

■ **Racing** ■ 1-2 players ■ **Activision** *Destructive '70s-influenced driving shoot-'em-up* Blowing up buildings and cars using "crazee" '70s vehicles sounds great, but

with just more destruction per extra level and no real "woomph" behind the explosions, monotony is hot on your heels. ★★

Or try: *Twisted Metal 2* ■ 1-2 players ■ SCEE ■ Futuristic first-person shooter. ★★

V-Rally

■ **Driving** ■ 1-2 player ■ **Infogrames** ■ **Platinum**

Rally rather good Since *GT* it's been difficult for other driving games to make themselves heard, but this age-old PlayStation rally simulation is a worthy contender, especially at a budget price. Even simply staying on the track is more difficult than you'd expect, but the addition of Dual Shock rumblings and another car make this new Platinum re-release a sensible purchase. ★★★★★

Or try: *Tommi Makinen Rally* ■ 1-2 players ■ Europress ■ 130 tracks, but still beaten to the flag by the competition. ★★

Wargames

■ **Strategy** ■ 1-2 players ■ **Electronic Arts** *Action-orientated strategy game*

The missions are simple and limited in number, but this is a very worthy action-based alternative to C&C. The wide range of vehicles you can control and the capture-the-flag two-player game, will keep you laughing as you watch men die. ★★★★★



Warhammer: Dark Omen

■ **Strategy** ■ 1 player ■ **Electronic Arts** *Sequel to the fantasy-based RPG* This suffers because of the joy pad control and as you scrap on the polygon-based battle grounds, earning cash for more weaponry, the regular feeling of not quite understanding what's going on and the need to repeat certain missions many times over, makes this one for the fans only. ★★

Wild Arms

■ **RPG** ■ 1 player ■ **SCEE**

Huge role-play adventure Strong RPG, but eclipsed by the shadow of Square's seminal classic *Final Fantasy VII*. Suffers from *Final Fantasy*'s random battle syndrome and the slick-but-retro-looking visuals strip away much of the feeling of involvement, but it's still very absorbing. ★★★★★

WipEout

■ **Racing** ■ 1-2 players ■ **Psygnosis** ■ **Platinum**

The game that made the PlayStation the console of choice It boasts the soundtrack that helped make gaming "cool", but unforgiving controls and nasty opposing craft mean you'll need perseverance. Your reward sees you careering down classic neon tracks at incredible speeds and throwing up your lunch. ★★★★★

Or try: *Motorhead* ■ 1-2 players ■ Gremlin Interactive ■ Furious racing action. ★★★★★

WipEout 2097

■ **Racing** ■ 1-2 players ■ **Psygnosis** *A sequel 100 years in the making*

A better bet than the original for the casual racer, as the learning curve is more gentle, but the new, more difficult class *Psygnosis* has added should make the veterans weep. Comes with excellent CPU opposition, more weapons and the twistiest tracks this side of Alton Towers. ★★★★★

World Cup '98

■ **Sports** ■ **Multi-player** ■ **EA Sports** *Sophisticated stadium football* The classic football package about, and the only one where soundly whipping Argentina gives you any real feel-good factor. Des and Motty are on the mic, and you get seemingly infinite options and stats, but most crucially, the gameplay's also more intelligent than its predecessors. Great controls and camera angles mean instant satisfaction, but with questionable longevity. ★★★★★

Worms

■ **Puzzle** ■ 1-4 players ■ **Ocean** ■ **Platinum** *Sadistic invertebrates strap on weapons and cause death*

Tries too hard to be cute and different, and subsequently has a very gimmicky feel. The shareware origins are all-too easy to discern and the AI will make you spit blood, so *Worms* is best played with a friend. On the plus side, you can customise the game to your heart's content. ★★

WWF Warzone

■ **Wrestling** ■ 1-4 players

■ **Acclaim Entertainment** *Lardy leotard lovelies fight it out*

With moves and characters that make play interesting and a great create-a-player section that enables you to custom-build your own fighter. Unfortunately, it's a bit slow and sluggish, and there's little variety from fight to fight, but the range of modes, from Trainer to All-Out War, should help to keep you vaguely interested. ★★★★★

Or try: *WCW Nitro* ■ 1-2 players ■ THQ ■ Crazy men in swimming costumes. ★★

Xenocracy

■ **Shooter** ■ 1-2 players

■ **Grolier Interactive** *Mission-based space shooter* Strategy and tactics in this shooter turn out to have little bearing on the actual game you end up playing, and the mission briefings lead you to expect more than there is. There's plenty of shooting, but it's dull stuff with dismal graphics, difficult controls and weapons that are genetic clones of one another. ★★

X-Men Vs Street Fighter

■ **Fighter** ■ 1-2 players

■ **Virgin Interactive** *Entertainment Fight!* Merges the X-Men into the *Street Fighter* universe, and maintains the control system and sprite-based characters that you've come to expect from the series, while adding fighters of a size to rival the Empire State Building. A bit repetitive, jerky and shallow to please true fighting fans. ★★

Zero Divide 2

■ **Fighter** ■ 1-2 players ■ **SCEE**

Mad robot-beating game There's hardly any moves. There's no feeling of contact. There aren't nearly enough flashing lights or big bangs. There's no sensation of adrenaline coursing at speed through your throbbing veins. And it looks terrible. Best leave it on the shelf, then. ★

Or try: *Bio Freaks*

■ 1-2 players ■ GT Interactive ■ Unhinged human-robot hybrid tussling ★★

PC

Actua Ice Hockey

■ **Sports** ■ 1-3 players ■ **Gremlin Interactive** *Freezing fast-paced action* Likely to be overshadowed by *NHL '99*, but still the beauty of the ice hockey world, despite some glitchy graphics, especially since you get

to play as any one of the world's top teams. The controls are tricky, but it all takes place at a decent pace, and the very harsh computer opponent and tactics will satisfy true bloodsport...er, sorry, ice hockey fans. ★★

Actua Soccer 2

■ **Sports** ■ 1-4 players

■ **Gremlin Interactive** *Actually football* Convincing graphics and a shedload of camera angles, but the latter seem kind of pointless when you will almost certainly be sticking with one. The play is frustrating, there's a very limited number of options and, quite shockingly, it's worse than its PlayStation incarnation. ★★

Or try: *Jack Charlton's Soccer Nation* ■ 1 player ■ Attica ■ The worst football game ever. ★

Actua Tennis

■ **Sports** ■ 1-4 players

■ **Gremlin Interactive** *Straws and cream sim*

Packed with stats and gorgeous motion capture, but introducing a power bar sacrifices the directional control that you really need in a tennis game. The fallibility of the computer opponents can make for annoying matches, too. And why on Earth is Barry Davies doing the commentary? ★★

Or try: *Game, Net and Match* ■ Sports ■ 1-2 players ■ Blue Byte ■ Frill-free, networked tennis. ★★

Andretti Racing

■ **Racing** ■ 1 player ■ **EA Classics** ■ **Budget** *Tarmac-burning driving sim*

A rather dull race around several boring American ovals. Luckily, there's a stock car racing section and some slightly more exciting tracks to liven things up a bit. Although we'd only recommend this to arcade racing fans, there are nearly enough options to satisfy the more serious simmer. ★★

BioSys

■ **Strategy/adventure** ■ 1 player ■ **Take 2**

Interactive Survival alone in a dome Stay alive by keeping your gigantic biotome ticking over. *BioSys* chucks a load of puzzles and resource management at you, but doesn't become frustrating. The plot will suck you in, but you might find it a bit slow. ★★

Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain

■ **RPG** ■ 1 player

■ **Activision** ■ **Budget** *Drac on your PC* This vampire-laden top-down *Gauntlet*-style RPG is as hammed up as a side portion of gammon, and as bad-taste as they come, with maiden's blood being gulped down all over the shop. But it looks abysmal and the linear, monotonous nature of the levels makes for abject tedium. ★★

Buggy

■ **Driving** ■ 1-2 players

■ **Gremlin Interactive** *Radio-controlled racing lunacy* The 16 teeny-weeny cars are heaven to handle, bounding and skidding all over the shop, and have enough differences to make them lasting fun. But the tracks – indoors and out – while lovely to look at, are a bit confusing, and there's not the fun or hidden depth of *Mario* and friends. ★★

Bust-A-Move 2

■ **Puzzle** ■ 1-2 players ■ **Acclaim Entertainment**

Match bubbles, go mad One of the most addictive puzzlers since *Tetris*, bringing its bubble-colliding strategies to your screen in an explosion of rainbow-hued visuals. It's a simple idea, and provides much more of a challenge than you'd initially think, with the

particularly addictive two-player mode highlighting the brilliance of the concept. ★★★★★

Caesar III

■ **Strategy** ■ 1 player ■ **Sierra** *Roman-based strategy antics* There's two to play this – either as a straight *Sim City* rip-off, or as a mission-based Roman Emperor-em-up. It's complicated, and the amount of stuff to do may bring on a "Caesar", but stick at it and you'll find it involving and addictive. ★★★★★

Carmageddon 2: Carpocalypse Now

■ **Driving** ■ 1-6 players ■ **Sales Curve** *Bloody car action*

The controversy added road-rage is back once again, complete with the UK's green-blooded zombies instead of red-blooded humans. With the game structure improved to include races and deathmatches, and a load of great cars, interesting power-ups and messy weapons, it's a pleasing way to pass the time. ★★



Castrol Honda Superbikes World Championship

■ **Racing** ■ 1 player ■ **Interactive Entertainment**

Motorbikes A playable game, but the over-sensitive controls make it far too hard. ★★

Championship Manager 2

■ **Sports management** ■ 1-8 players ■ **EIDOS** *Interactive Be Kev Keegan* With *CMJ* imminent, this prequel has appeared at a bargain price. Looking a little out-of-date now, and still far, far too easy, it's nevertheless engrossing and packed with neat details. ★★★★★

Creatures 2

■ **Breed-'em-up** ■ 1 player ■ **Mindscape** *Raise another family of cuddly creatures*

Less a game, more an exercise in parenthood, the main idea behind *Creatures 2* is to breed your race of furry critters and then use them to search for biotechnical bits and bobs. This new release has more options, more enemies and more places to explore. ★★

Conflict: Freespace The Great War

■ **Space combat** ■ **Multi-player** ■ **Interplay** *Sprawling, intricate, space shooter*

Escort this, protect that, shoot the other – *Conflict* might at first seem like a direct *X-wing* vs *TIE-Fighter* rip-off, but it's more the game that *X-wing* always should have been. Watch out for the superb explosions, cleverly designed missions and plenty of replayability. ★★★★★

Or try: *X-wing vs TIE Fighter* ■ Multi-player ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment ■ Impressive *Star Wars*-based shooter. ★★★★★

Cyberstorm 2: Corporate Wars

■ **Strategy** ■ 1-8 players ■ **Sierra** ■ **Budget**

■ **Futuristic battle sim** Top-down strategy action with a bunch of battle machines and featuring play so complex that your brain will break. It's made more interesting by the need to build your equipment from its component parts, and the choice of turn-based or real-time play is handy, but this is still distinctly average. ★★

Curse of Monkey Island

■ **Adventure** ■ 1 player
■ **LucasArts** **Fantastic point-and-click adventure** Genuinely amusing, and with clever puzzles, *Monkey Island* scores well for its controls, which make exploring and examining as easy as possible. Great to look at and to listen to, if a tad frustrating and illogical, but mostly top notch. ★★★★★

Dark Reign

■ **Strategy** ■ 1-2 players
■ **Activision** ■ **budget**
■ **Another futuristic battle sim** The future-bound setting of this real-time strategy title, the intelligence of the missions and the clear interface make for a pleasurable experience. At this price, you can't go wrong, even if the visuals and sounds leave a little to be desired. ★★★★★

Or try: **Armour Command** ■ 1 player ■ Take 2 Interactive ■ Tanks 'n' strategy. ★★

DethKarb

■ **Racing** ■ 1-8 players
■ **Infogrames** **More space-age racing** A futuristic racer akin to *Wipeout* and the like. The four worlds and 12 circuits are brilliantly designed in a rollercoaster vein, and there's tons of weaponry to get your sweaty mitts on. But the continual skidding off the road and steep learning curve will put you off eventually. ★★

Destruction Derby 2

■ **Racing** ■ 1-10 players
■ **turn-taking** ■ **Psygnosis**
■ **Hit-and-run rivalry** Fine as a

normal racing game, but better as an all-out smash-'em-up that gives edge-of-your-seat thrills, coupled with gorgeous visuals and images of your car as it disintegrates. Great tracks, genuine speed and smart computer cars, too. Yay! ★★★★★

Diablo

■ **Strategy/RPG**
■ **1-4 players** ■ **Blizzard**
■ **Hack 'n' slash adventure** A real-time strategy RPG that's incredibly intuitive, with hidden depths and complexity to be found if you delve deeper into its dark and sticky innards. A whole load of monster-killing and spell-casting to keep bearded types happy, absolutely massive and it looks like a dream too. ★★★★★



Die By The Sword

■ **Adventure** ■ 1 player
■ **Interplay** **Flawed combat masterpiece** Combat/adventure in a medieval/fantasy world with a third person/ sweeping camera view. The engine, which calculates animation by looking at both bone joints and gravity, does the biz, but winning every battle in one move defeats the purpose. ★★

Or try: **Tomb Raider II** ■ 1 player ■ EIDOS Interactive ■ A second outing for the lovely Lara. ★★★★★

Dune 2000

■ **Strategy** ■ 1 player
■ **Electronic Arts**
■ **The granddad of strategy**

■ **re-invigorated** The original *Dune* invented the real-time strategy game. This new version houses 27 levels and three "tribes" to choose from, but doesn't offer any further obvious improvements aside from the new visuals. It's too simplistic to be great and faces potentially better up-and-coming rivals. ★★

Dungeon Keeper Strategy

■ **EA Classics** **Classic**
■ **dungeon management** Run your own murky torture chamber in this strategy-laden epic. Difficult at first, especially with the mixture of game modes and cameras, but the sense of humour and finely-tuned gameplay will eventually hook you. ★★★★★

FA Premier League Football Manager 99

■ **Sports** ■ 1 player
■ **Electronic Arts** **Be Glenn Hoddle, but better** Including both Scottish and English divisions, and giving you plenty of coaching and business matters to deal with, this is the most realistic football management title out there – your decisions really affect the turnout of games. The icing and candles on the cake are the commentary by John Motson and the lovely-looking 3D kickabouts. ★★★★★

F1 Racing Simulation

■ **Driver** ■ 1-8 players
■ **Ubisoft** **Driving for would-be Damons** All the stats and tracks are here, and the handling and controls are perfect. There's a slight lack of realism and customisation options, but it's very fast and offers a real challenge. Don't expect to be able to smash into verges without paying the ultimate price – your death. ★★★★★

Or try: **Alain Prost Grand Prix** ■ 1 player ■ Ocean ■ Similar but less realistic. ★★

The Fifth Element

■ **Puzzle** ■ 1 player ■ **Ubisoft**
■ **Obscure futuristic movie tie-in** Twenty three levels of *Tomb Raider*-style shenanigans, made to the usual recipe: an equal measure of running and jumping, and a big "knob" of shooting. The difficult controls and camera difficulties hamper the gameplay, though, and it bears less relevance to the film than you'd think. ★★



Final Fantasy VII

■ **RPG** ■ 1 player ■ **EIDOS Interactive** **Why shouldn't the PC have the best RPG ever as well?** It'll keep you up all night, it'll make you cry, it'll make your nose bleed, but only if someone hits you in the face with a copy of it. Which they ought to, if you don't buy it. A great story, lavish graphics and brilliant selection of spells. It's a little confusing, rarely allowing you to see your opponents before you get into a fight, but put this down to Japanese quirkiness and you'll be on to a winner. ★★★★★

Flight Simulator 98

■ **Three guesses** ■ 1 player
■ **Microsoft** **Ultra-realistic aeroplane antics** This isn't for the casual gamer, including, as it does, a load of knobs to get the hang of. In that it's supposed to be like a true flying experience, the controls are difficult, but some of the graphics are less realistic than

you might like. There's also a quite nightmarishly difficult-to-control helicopter included as a "bit of a laugh", too. ★★★★★

Football World Manager

■ **Sports** ■ 1 player ■ **Ubisoft**
■ **At the end of the day...** A cornucopia of clubs, a clear and easy-to-use interface and not too much confusing financial rubbish. Unfortunately, when your brilliant decisions get transferred to the actual games, it's difficult to make out what's going on and the highlights are too short. Promising, but unfulfilling. ★★

Forsaken

■ **First-person shooter**
■ **1-16 players** ■ **Acclaim Entertainment** **Almost Quake – almost certainly better** One of the most intense 3D experiences you'll have on your PC, *Forsaken* wastes no time at all dumping you in a room full of droids, missiles, gun emplacements, robots and whizz-bang special effects, and it also features the best combat action and 16-player deathmatch since time began. ★★★★★

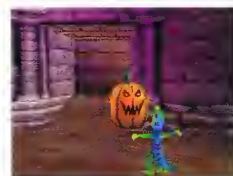
Or try: **G-Police** ■ 1 player ■ **Psygnosis** ■ Compulsive, hard-to-control shooter. ★★★★★

The Full Wormage

■ **Shooter** ■ 1-16 players ■ **MicroProse** ■ **budget**
■ **Wriggly deathmatch compendium** This seems a bit pointless considering that most people already own a *Worm* of their own, and this particular compilation of *Worms United*, *Worms 2* and *Worms Pinball* is rather pricey for a budget offering. Still, if 2D, turn-based, player vs player worm-centred combat tickles your fancy, this is the can of nematodes for you. ★★

Gangsters

■ **Strategy** ■ 1-4 players ■ **EIDOS** **Married to the mob** This '30s-set mob-'em-up combines the best bits of *Sim City* and turn-based strategy games, with your motley collection of hoods able to go just about anywhere and do almost anything. The controls make things tricky, but the rewarding complexity and sheer look of the thing will keep you at it. ★★



Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko

■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player
■ **Ubisoft** **A 3D gecko in sunglasses. Obviously** Originally debuted on Panasonic's flash-in-the-pan 3DO, the elements are all in place for a good romp: simple controls, variety of levels and sub-quests a-go-go. The bad points are a toss up between the unwieldy camera angles, and Leslie "Carry On" Philip's voice-over – it's a close call. ★★

The Golf Pro

■ **Sports** ■ 1 player
■ **Empire Interactive** **Novel golf sim** Uses a new swing system rather than the usual power-bar, which makes play much more difficult initially, though it does simplify with practice. The scenery in both courses, although a pre-rendered cop-out, will make you want to bring a picnic to the game and the ball physics are

superb. ★★★★★

Or try: **Actua Golf 2** ■ 1-4 players ■ **Gremlin Interactive** ■ Realistic and fun golf simulation. ★★★★★

Grand Theft Auto

■ **Crim-'em-up** ■ 1 player
■ **Take 2 Interactive** **Drugs, death and driving** Notorious for its lack of scruples, encouraging killing bystanders and trafficking of drugs, *GTA* gives you a sense of freedom as you drive around massive cities. The graphics are disappointing, but the missions are enjoyable, even if repetitive. However, games where failure results in you being plonked back at the start of a level are asking for trouble. ★★★★★

Grim Fandango

■ **Adventure** ■ 1 player ■ **LucasArts** **Death warmed up** The style, presentation and content of this odd, amusing adventure leave it towering head-and-shoulders above everything else. The puzzles are very difficult and often obscure, but you'll forgive it for its neat touches, absorbing plot and downright loveliness. ★★★★★

Half-Life

■ **Shooter** ■ 1-16 players
■ **Sierra** **The best PC game ever** A stunningly atmospheric first-person shooter, built around a believable environment and logical puzzles, as well as including a decent amount of gorgeous all-out alien-blasting. The blastable meanies demonstrate mind-boggling intelligence, and the narrative is both absorbing and seamlessly interspersed with the action. We like it. ★★★★★

Hardwar

■ **Strategy** ■ 1 player
■ **Gremlin Interactive** **Exciting mix of trading and combat** A step in the right direction – this unofficially updates the great 8-bit game *Elite* for the Labour-driven, Spice Girl-warbling, *Sunset Beach*-goggling late '90s. The environment is enormous, but the gameplay is hampered by too much waiting around and not enough doing. ★★★★★

Or try: **Privateer 2: The Darkening** ■ 1 player ■ **Electronic Arts** ■ Dark and spooky. ★★★★★

Hedz

■ **Shooter** ■ 1 player ■ **Hasbro** **Comedy head-swapping shoot-'em-up** Strap heads on to your alien torso, adopt their attributes and weapons, and proceed to wander about killing other aliens. Adding to your collection of heads is great, but chasing aliens for keys to open every successive door soon gets tiring and dull. ★★

Heart of Darkness

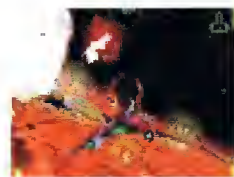
■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player
■ **Ocean** **Visually stunning runabout** It was five years in the making and, oh so very nearly worth the wait. Stretches the 2D platformer out as far as it will go without it snapping straight back and hurting your fingers. The backdrops are beautiful, and there are puzzles a-plenty. ★★★★★

IF/A-18E: Carrier Strike Fighter

■ **Flight sim** ■ 1 player
■ **Interactive Magic** **Fly planes about** Simulating a craft that won't be flying for five years (but based on enough test data to ensure authenticity), for the most part *Strike Fighter* looks absolutely gorgeous. The missions are varied and convincing, and your success alters what you're offered to do in future levels. Unfortunately, you'll need at least a PII before you can run it properly, though. ★★★★★

Interstate 76

■ **Racing** ■ 1-8 players
■ **Activision** **'70s retro challenge** Taking its cue from the *Twisted Metal* games, this racer-come-shooter suffers from jerky and simplistic graphics and repetitive gameplay, although you're sure to find plenty of fun in just driving about, and shooting up scenery and other vehicles. The ongoing plot and huge candyfloss afros will satisfy all but the most obsessive '70s-phile. ★★



Incoming: Lux et Rubor

■ **First-person shooter**
■ **1 player** ■ **Rage Software** **Fancy, multi-vehicle blaster** A real triumph of conventionality over originality, *Incoming* features every shoot-'em-up cliché known, but the gorgeous visuals, wide variety of vehicles and frenetic finger action prove there's plenty of life in the genre yet. ★★★★★

Jimmy White's 2: Cueball

■ **Sports** ■ 2 players
■ **Virgin Interactive Entertainment** **Snooker loopy nuts are we** Superb snooker and pool sim, with a highly playable game engine and wacky darts, draughts and fruit machine sub-games. ★★★★★

Or try: **Virtua Pool 2** ■ Multi-player ■ Interplay ■ Pool without the celebrity. ★★★★★

King's Quest: Mask of Eternity

■ **RPG** ■ 1 player ■ **Cendant** **Third-person RPG-ing** A graphically-impressive third-person game which attempts to disguise the fact that it's an RPG by employing fancy graphical effects. But the combat – statistics-based and requiring you to select appropriate weapons – gives its role-playing origins away, and there's a strong traditional object-oriented puzzle element. Approachable, easy to use and fun. ★★★★★

Klingon Honor Guard

■ **Shooter** ■ 1-16 players
■ **MicroProse** **Pasty-headed Doom-style exploits** This is based on the excellent *Unreal* engine, which automatically makes it beautiful and speedy. A full complement of niggling factors, such as suddenly completing levels without even realising you were anywhere near the end of a mission, are negated by the sheer intensity of the big-weapon shooting action. Those crazy Klingon boys, eh? ★★★★★

Links LS '99

■ **Sports** ■ 1-4 players ■ **EIDOS Interactive** **Golf for it!** The visuals are lovely, as you'd expect, but it takes time to draw the scenery and – predictably – *Links* uses the same power-bar system as all other golf games. Still, with four courses, eight players at your disposal and 30 modes of play who's complaining? ★★★★★

Or try: **Microsoft Golf 1998** ■ Multi-player ■ Microsoft, motion-captured players and dodgy controls. ★★

Madden NFL 99

■ **Sports** ■ 1-4 player ■ **EA** **Sports Oval-shaped ball sim** A proper simulation, with all the options, tactics, bells and whistles included, and as such only really

LONG TERM TEST

Wave Race 64

Damp squib or wet dream?



■ During the N64's childhood, playground fights would always be won by the cocky little PlayStation. "You haven't got a decent serious racer," teased Sony's grey box, and the N64 would cry. And yet, hiding in the shadows, was a quiet kid – *Wave Race 64*. He knew he could end the N64's humiliation, but no-one paid him any attention.

Despite the fact that even N64 owners often forget it exists, *Wave Race* is still the N64's best "serious" racer. Visually, it makes *Niagara Falls* look tame. The slow pan away from the glistening and undulating ocean in the intro sequence is enough

to make even today's arcade jet ski games look primitive, and the realistic ripples, splashes and roars of the waters would even bring a smile to Captain Birdseye's wizened face.

But it's in the controls and handling where Mr Miyamoto and co. excel. The analogue stick gives exact control of the jet ski and all its reactions are nigh-on perfect as it bobs and slides through the waves. The shortcomings are more obvious than they were two years ago – the game isn't drawing that far ahead and the frame rate leaves a little to be desired – but there's still enough here to leave you dripping with more.

recommended to die-hard fans. It looks good, the controls do their controlling sufficiently well, but it's complex and strangely unsatisfying. Still, that Madden bloke, eh? Who the hell is he? ★★

Magic & Mayhem
Strategy ■ 1 player ■ Virgin Interactive **Swords and sorcery in strategy shocker** Featuring knights, wizards and all the usual stuff, this real-time strategy gives you a surprisingly uncommon spell-casting, creature-creating environment. The main characters are well-designed, the story effortlessly sucks you in and the 3D maps are varied and realistic enough to make you feel like you're there. ★★★★★

MechCommander
■ Strategy ■ 1 player ■ MicroProse **Real time strategy, management and big robots** Based on the *BattleTech* board game, but a strategic step away from the action of previous *MechWarrior* games, *Commander* boasts clearly laid-out logistics, intricate detail and superb level design. ★★★★★
Or try: *MechWarrior 2* ■ 1 player ■ Activision ■ Huge, hulking exoskeleton robots. ★★



MicroMachines V3
■ Racing ■ 1-4 players ■ Codemasters **Top-down, miniature racing** Embrace a world where you race round table-top tracks in a mini car, boat or ice cream van, preferably against as many other human players as possible. As good on the PC as on any of the consoles. ★★★★★

Microsoft Combat Flight Simulator WWII Europe Series
■ Flight sim ■ 1-4 players ■ Microsoft **You sexy mother f*cker** Fly as any one of a number of lovingly re-created historic planes, with guns a-blazing. The free-flight and quick-command options cater for arcade fans, while the missions and campaigns will bring a smile to the face of the die-hard plane freak. Not much improved over the original, but still a very fine sim. ★★★★★

Motorcross Madness 3D
■ Racing ■ 1 player ■ Microsoft **Motorbikes and dirt tracks** A huge array of racing modes and more tracks than you can shake a Kawasaki at. *Madness* offers enough of a racing thrill to deem motorbike racing games worthy of the PC. No two-player mode, though. ★★
Or try: *Moto Racer* ■ 1-2 players ■ Electronic Arts ■ More of the same. ★★

Motorhead
■ Racing ■ Multi-player ■ Gremlin Interactive **Futuristic sports-car visual drooler** Nine cars, slick track design, a myriad of tiny road-side animations (like monorails and space craft) and the right difficulty pitch a cinch to drive, but hard to drive well. Fast, too. ★★★★★
Or try: *Screamer Rally* ■ 1 player ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment ■ Watch that scenery fly by. ★★★★★

NBA Live 98
■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ Electronic Arts **Ball in the**

basket fun Although it is slightly too easy, mainly because of the limited computer opposition, *NBA Live 98* was never pretending to accurately represent basketball. However, it controls well, looks fantastic and provides a wealth of options, enabling you to tailor the game as you wish. ★★★★★

Newman/Haas Racing
Racing ■ 1-8 players ■ Psygnosis **F1 drive-about** Sixteen drivers, 11 full-3D tracks, the pits, smooth and fast racing, and everything else – so what's wrong? The sound is terrible, the crashes a non-event, the visuals have packed up and gone home, and the right-angled corners are someone's idea of a joke. ★★

Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee
Platformer ■ 1 player ■ GT Interactive **2D platforming with puzzling chucked in** Budget release of a pointless conversion from the PlayStation, with dated gameplay that involves merely moving your alien from one screen to the next. It's just console fodder, converted for the sake of it – the PC doesn't need this kind of thing. ★★



Outwars
■ Adventure ■ 1 player ■ Microsoft **Starship Troopers: the (unofficial) game** Drop down a lift shaft in an overrun research installation, then try to raise a cargo lift as big as a *Quake* level. *Outwars* innovates, and breathes fresh air into this 3D shoot-'em-up/arcade adventure *Quake/Tomb Raider* cross-over. The over-zealous sudden-death routines do become irritating, though. ★★★★★
Or try: *Terra Nova* ■ 1-2 player ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment ■ Got a spare brain? You'll need it. ★★

Pandemonium 2
■ Platformer ■ 1 player ■ Ubisoft **budget Deathly dull running and jumping** It looks like it's in 3D but actually *Pandemonium 2* is 2D in a very cunning disguise, so that your path is tediously restricted to one route. The characters are irritating, the cut-scenes crop up far too often and the running and jumping action is at least ten years out of date. ★★

Player Manager 2 Extra: Chase For Glory
■ Sports ■ 1 player ■ Sold Out **budget Tedious football coachmanship** Suffers the same fate as all management games that try to shoe-horn in an arcade section – the boardroom bits are slow and tedious, and the pitch parts look terrible and aren't exciting in the slightest. The Man City of management games. ★

Pod Gold
■ Racing ■ 1-8 players ■ Ubisoft **budget Futuristic racing... again** The circuits are designed to make life as difficult as possible, with dead-ends and intersections causing more crashes than you will be able to find swear-words for. Plenty of tracks and vehicles, a multi-player option and at a budget price it's not to be sniffed at. ★★

Populous: The Beginning
Strategy ■ 1 player ■ Electronic Arts **Try your hand at omnipotence** You're God! Build huts, breed warriors and braves, get new spells to alter the land, fight and conquer enemies, and all that. Essentially the original game all over again, but it's a lot easier this time and, of course, it's all gone 3D. Feel the depth and the intelligent learning curve, and you'll be playing for hours. ★★★★★
Or try: *Riverworld* ■ 1 player ■ Cryo ■ Time-warping real-time strategy. ★★

Powerboat Racing
■ Racing ■ Multi-player ■ Interplay **Watersports** Close inspection of *Miami Vice* and James Bond will tell you that speedboats are cool. Thanks to clumsy, blocky, jerky visuals and stunted gameplay *PowerBoat Racing* is not. ★★
Or try: *MotorHead* ■ 1-2 player ■ Gremlin Interactive ■ Futuristic, speedy, gorgeous. ★★

Powerslide
■ Racing ■ 1-8 players ■ GT Interactive **Rough terrain driving** Looking lovely and moving like a gerbil on speed, this racer takes in courses set in places like deserts, city walls and mine-shafts. But despite the cars reacting realistically to the terrain, it can become frustrating and the relatively short length of the championships means that you won't get endless entertainment from this one. ★★



Premier Manager '98
■ Sports manager ■ 1 player ■ Gremlin Interactive **Football managerial action** All dressed up but nowhere to go – there's an accurate database update, but the imperfections that bugged *PM's* previous incarnation remain and now stick out further than Jimmy Hill's chin. Still, it's only 20 nicker. ★★

Pro Pinball: Timeshock!
Pinball ■ 1 player ■ GT Interactive **It's a pinball game** Only one table? Once the shock of this has worn off, the perfect ball physics and over-the-top range of flashing lights, bells and whistles will keep silver-balled fans happy for months. ★★★★★
Or try: *Pinball Soccer* ■ 1 player ■ Pin-Ball Games ■ More themed pinball. ★★

Prost Grand Prix
■ Racing ■ 1 player ■ Infogrames **Variable F1 sim** An okay F1 sim, with a discrepancy in the difficulty levels that has you driving like a member of the McLaren team when you have the automatic gears and brakes turned on, and like that woman from *Driving School* when they're not. ★★
Or try: *Grand Prix 2* ■ 1 player ■ MicroProse ■ Geoff Crammond's absurdly accurate F1 sim. ★★

Quake II
■ First-person shooter ■ 1-infinite players ■ Activision **Seminal first-person baddie-beater** Basically more of the same, but that's more of one of the finest games in the world. *Quake II* is undoubtedly best played over a network or on the Internet, and offers bigger, better (although not

cleverer) monsters, massive guns, improved level designs and a fully customisable game engine.

★★★★
Or try: *Rebel Moon Rising* ■ 1-4 players ■ GT Interactive ■ Ugly and boring, unusual voice control option. ★

Railroad Tycoon II
■ Strategy ■ 1-16 players ■ Take 2 **Thermos-'em-up** A great improvement on the classic original, with financial management and train direction given more of an emphasis at the expense of tedious railway construction. There's a potful of time zones and trains to play with, and the range of options leaves you with scope to customise the game to your choosing. Chuffing great. ★★★★★

Rainbow Six
Strategy ■ 1-16 players ■ Red Storm **Stealthy first-person hostage action** Starring SAS-style combat heroes, this is a third-person shooter set in real-life terrorist situations. The healthy dose of realism works well and the overwhelming amount of strategy makes it more cerebral than your usual shoot-'em-up. A shame, then, that your highly trained team-mates often act like idiots. ★★★★★

Ring Adventure ■ 1 player ■ Cryo **Opera-based adventure, believe it or not** With Wagner playing constantly and different worlds throwing up characters who are often wont to sing at you, *Ring* is a little bit different. It looks gorgeous, it's utterly mad, but at the end of the day it's the same set of adventure-style puzzles as every other adventure title. ★★

Rival Realms
■ Strategy ■ 1-8 players ■ Titus **Swords and sorcery** A reasonably happy marriage of real-time strategy and role-playing. The usual "send your wizards into battle to die" scenario has been coupled with characters whose skills extend over time, making them gradually more valuable than the usual RTS fodder. Unfortunately, the fiddly controls and lack of general character intelligence messes it up a tad. ★★

Roland Garros 1998: The French Open
■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ Grolier Interactive **Accurate tennis sim** Garros's great strength (making sure you have complete control over where the ball will land as you hit it) is also its weakness (making it far too easy to beat the computer opponents). There are 50 players, each of the four courts look lovely and, despite the limited options and near-invisible ball, you'll be "love-ing" this one. ★★

Sentinel Returns
■ Puzzler ■ 1 player ■ Psygnosis **One of the most original puzzle games ever** An 8-bit classic, *Sentinel* was the most bizarre concept for a game: absorbing trees around a 3D landscape, while avoiding the gaze of the Sentinel at the top. Just don't expect to be quite so amazed second time around. ★★★★★

Shogo: Mobile Armour Division
■ Shooter ■ 1-16 players ■ Microdis **Big robots shooting** A first-person shooter distinguished by its Japanese, anime stylings and the opportunity to dress up as a massive robot. Getting about in a hulking great metal suit is easier than you'd think and the striking visuals perfectly complement the intelligent level

design. Not a very big game, but a good 'un. ★★★★★

Sid Meier's Gettysburg!
■ Strategy ■ 1-8 players ■ EA Classics **Re-live obscure American battles** Sid Meier turns out another historically accurate, yet genuinely fun, real-time strategy game. Here you get to take control of either side in the American Civil War and you get equal measures of both good, head-hurting strategy and all-out shooting action. ★★★★★

Sin
■ Shooter ■ 1-16 players ■ Activision **Traditional shooting action** Effectively the culmination of years of first-person shooters. The graphical feel and engine of *Quake II*, the mission style and gorgeous sniper rifle from *GoldenEye*, and the speech and big guns from *Duke Nukem*. Unfortunately, *Half-Life's* gone and done it all better, making *Sin* look distinctly old hat already. ★★

Spec Ops: Rangers Lead the Way
■ Strategy ■ 1 player ■ Gametek **First-person war sim** Complete five separate missions where stealth and the need to learn tactics are vital. The graphics and AI are top-notch, and the ability to control two men via one set of controls is innovative, though it doesn't always work. You will need a high-spec PC and graphics acceleration. ★★

StarCraft
■ Strategy ■ Multi-player ■ Blizzard Entertainment **Real-time strategy** The same mix of building, research, resource management and combat as its prequel, but with enough intricacy and sidesteps to inject life into the genre. ★★★★★

Starship Titanic
■ Adventure ■ 1 player ■ Zblac Entertainment **Douglas Adams' foray into adventure gaming** Co-written by Mr Hitchhiker himself, *Titanic* is a text-driven adventure that actually works. It's witty, logical and engaging, if just a tiny bit frustrating at times. And it's got Terry Jones. ★★

Star Trek Federation Compilation
■ Compilation ■ 1 player ■ Interplay **budget It's a compilation, Jim** Ignore the *Next Generation* titles, enjoy the 25th Anniversary title for the self-indulgent fun that it is and then concentrate your efforts on *Star Fleet Academy*, which provides you with the opportunity to sit in the Captain's chair and pilot yourself around the galaxy. May the force be with you! Oh, bugger... wrong film. ★★★★★

Star Wars: Supremacy
■ Strategy ■ 1 player **Write your own plot** Set in a time after the destruction of the original *Death Star*, *Supremacy* gives you the chance to command the entire Rebel Alliance or Empire and re-write *Star Wars* history. An R2-D2-with-the-top-removed-sized bin full of strategies gets the thumbs up, but the over-complex gameplay may deter. ★★

Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream
■ Beat-'em-up ■ 1-2 players ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment **The nth version of the world's most famous fighting game** More coin-op-to-PC shenanigans, with manga-style graphics, lots of new characters and Super Combos. Ken's hair seems to have grown a

bit, too. Or maybe he's just had it styled. ★★

Team Apache
■ Flight sim ■ 1 player ■ Mindscape **Convincing chopper sim** Few other flight sims introduce the novice in such a friendly way, before proceeding to let all hell break loose around them in such terrifyingly convincing fashion. Recommended. ★★★★★
Or try: *Total Air War* ■ Multi-player ■ DID/Ocean ■ Hey you! Up in the sky. ★★★★★

Theme Hospital
Strategy ■ 1 player ■ EA Classics **Ailment-based real-time strategy** Assume the role of hospital manager, in a quest to build the perfect emergency ward and cure your patients of their comedy illnesses. Interesting at first, but gradually becomes more and more repetitive until you'll have had enough. Also, it just isn't funny. ★★★★★

Thief: The Dark Project
■ Sneak-'em-up ■ 1 player ■ EIDOS **Medieval sneak-'em-up** A first-person shooter with all the brazen room-crashing and gun-toting taken out, and replaced with *Metal Gear Solid*-style sneakiness and tip-toeing. Unlike *MGS*, the absence of all-out action has dealt the interest level a blow, but it's still atmospheric and absorbing. For a while. ★★

TOCA Touring Car Championship
■ Driver ■ 1-8 players ■ Codemasters **Realistic car handling** With a series of cars that handle, look and even sound different, and a level of accuracy in the tracks and stats maintained to the finest degree, *TOCA Touring Car* would be a truly essential purchase even without the realistic graphics. It's racing at its finest – why don't you own it? ★★★★★
Or try: *Test Drive 4* ■ 1-4 players ■ Electronic Arts ■ Fast but boring. ★★

Tomb Raider III
Puzzle ■ 1 player ■ EIDOS **Interactive The intelligent girl with the gun is back** A tendency toward sudden death, coupled with the same inadequate controls and frustrating, difficult puzzles. But it's *Tomb Raider*! You get intelligent level design. Gobs-smackingly gorgeous graphics. And this time, there're pathways to choose from to help keep you up all night with Lara. ★★★★★

Total Annihilation
Strategy ■ 1-8 player ■ GT **Replay Futuristic strategy nonsense** More intense than your *Command & Conquers* and the like, and as easy to use as an inflatable sheep. This manages to be easy for beginners and yet challenging for experts, the battles are great and there're plenty of patches and additions available on the Web, too. Buy this or feel stupid. ★★★★★

Trespasser
■ Shooter ■ 1 player ■ Electronic Arts **Disappointing dino shooter** EA has relied on the brilliantly realised real-world physics, but this is just not enough. The innovative new control system – where you interact with the game world through the character's arm – makes moving about and hitting the dino boys trickier than it should be. Plodding, tedious, confusing and no fun at all. ★

Triple Play 99
■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ Electronic Arts **Baseball for the fans** Baseball isn't the most exciting sport in the known

PC

universe, so we commend *TP '99* for doing a fine job of translating it for the PC. With the option of just a single game or a complete 170-game tournament, internet games and absolutely loads of players and stadiums to choose from, this is the simulation of choice for batfans. ★★ ★★



The X-Files

■ **Adventure** ■ 1 player
■ **Fox Interactive Spooky cash-in tie-in?** Sounds like a case for Mulder and Scully. It may just be a pile of video clips stuck together with VirtualCinema glue, but the seven weeks of exclusive filming, FBI notebook-full of trainpotter references and relative freedom of movement elevate the *X-Files* above the standard of most point-and-click adventures. ★★ ★★
Or try: **Blade Runner** ■ 1 player ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment ■ More film tie-in shenanigans. ★★ ★★

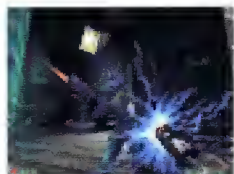
UFO: Enemy Unknown

■ **Strategy** ■ 1 player ■ **Sold Out** ■ **Budget Alien-filled brain-tickler** Turn-based combat from the boys who invented Spectrum classics *Chaos* and *Rebelstar*. It might not look good, but the *X-Files*-style investigate-

the-alien plot is very complex, exhaustive and easy to get sucked into, thanks largely to the easy-to-use controls and interface. ★★ ★★

Ultima Collection

■ **RPG compilation** ■ **Player numbers vary** ■ **Electronic Arts Seminal titles collected** Bringing together *Ultima* games from the last 20-or-so years, and presenting ten games from the series in the process, this collection suffers the same fate as most retro groupings; yesterday's faves are, in reality, quite dull compared to today's delights. Criminally omits a couple of games (like *Ultima Underworld*). The shame! ★★ ★★



Unreal

■ **First-person shooter** ■ **Multi-player** ■ **GT Interactive Doom clonestastic** This has to be the fastest, most enjoyable *Doom* clone available for the PC to date. It's completely packed with luscious scripted moments, a fully pumped-up atmosphere, strictly intelligent denizens and enough eye candy to rot your lashes. The slightly poor weapons do sometimes give the feeling that you are defending your corner with nothing more dangerous than a pair of curling tongs, but with neovites such as the simulated deathmatch for those who don't know a modem from a moped, *Unreal* deserves all the attention that you can possibly give it. ★★ ★★

Urban Assault

■ **Strategy** ■ 1 player
■ **Microsoft Post-nuclear skirmish** Battle alien scum in an adventure marred ever-so slightly by blurred textures, thin walls and some sharply polygonal structures. ★★ ★★
Or try: **BattleZone** ■ 1-2 players ■ Activision ■ Boardgame-based strategy. ★★ ★★

Wargasm

■ **Strategy** ■ 1-16 players ■ **Infogrames Ultra-realistic war sim** With graphics that'll make your family think you've taken to watching non-stop videos of the Gulf War, and the option to control battles from the squaddies' boots or the commander's throne, *Wargasm* is a breath-takingly comprehensive death-em-up. It's let down by your soldiers biting the big one if you leave them alone for a second, but it's so easy to control that you just won't care about this. ★★ ★★

Wetrix

■ **Puzzle** ■ 1 player ■ **Ocean Tetris meets Populous** You need to position the falling blocks on to a landscape to contain the water that rains down. Fun, but over-complicated. ★★ ★★
Or try: **Super Puzzle Fighter 2 Turbo** ■ 1-2 player ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment ■ Great title, great game. ★★ ★★

World Cup 98

■ **Sports** ■ 1-20 player
■ **Electronic Arts Licensed kickabout** Judged by graphics and licensing (as football games often are), this one wins hands down. But, while improving a little on *Road to the World Cup*, it also enables you to play smooth and exciting games (with or without the easy-to-pull-off fancy moves),

and there is even a limited strategy element. Goal! ★★ ★★
Or try: **World League Soccer '98** ■ 1-4 players ■ EIDOS Interactive ■ Unremarkable soccer sim. ★★ ★★

World of Combat 2000

■ **Simulation** ■ 1-100 players
■ **Novalogic** ■ **Budget** ■ **Real-world combat sim** Fancy getting your hands on a military helicopter, jet fighter or tank? Of course you do, and this is the compilation for you. They're all based on genuine military specs, and the controls are easy enough to cater for you if you're just beginning, yet complex enough of you're an expert. The visuals suffer slightly, but that doesn't matter a jot. ★★ ★★



X-COM: Interceptor

■ **Space strategy** ■ 1 player
■ **MicroProse Latest in the long line** The combination of real-time strategy and 3D action is perfected just as smoothly and effectively as the mix of strategy and tactical infantry combat in the other games. And the result? Another corker. ★★ ★★
Or try: **X-COM: Apocalypse** ■ 1-2 player ■ MicroProse ■ The prequel. ★★ ★★

N64

1080° Snowboarding

■ **Racing** ■ 1-4 players
■ **Nintendo It's a snowboarding game** The Wave Race team does it again, with a brilliant range of modes, plenty of tricks to pull off, loads of boards and loads of courses for you to have a crack at. As well as looking absolutely gorgeous, this snow-bound board sim offers beautiful controls and brilliant replays, and the stunts are suitably difficult to complete. ★★ ★★

All Star Baseball

■ **Sports** ■ 1-4 players
■ **Acclaim Entertainment Realistic bat-on-ball action** Makes simple baseball seem like a beautiful sport, with smooth-looking players and gorgeous backgrounds. It's much more of a simulation than other titles, and so a lot more thoughtful and challenging as a result. This, coupled with the range of stats and options, means wide smiles all round for baseball fans. ★★ ★★

Banjo-Kazooie

■ **3D platformer** ■ 1 player
■ **Nintendo/Rare Bizarre bear-bird crossover** With beautiful levels that beg you to explore them, and genuine challenge and variety provided by the occasional transformation into other animals, this very nearly knocks cocky old Mario off his perch. And it's the first Rare game not to include an eye-winding amount of cute. ★★ ★★

Bio Freaks

■ **Fighting** ■ 1-4 players
■ **GT Interactive/Midway Arm-attachment beat-em-up** Watch out for massive missile attacks and arms flying off all over the place, but beware the gimmicky up-in-the-air jet-pac bit that manages to detract from the main game. There are plenty of characters and moves, everything looks lovely and there's loads of

gore, but sadly it just won't light your fire. ★★ ★★
Or try: **Clayfighter 63 1/3** ■ 1-2 players ■ Interplay ■ Alleged comedy beat-em-up. ★

Blast Corps

■ **Destruct-em-up** ■ 1 player ■ **Nintendo/Rare Senseless structure smashing** A truly unique game (the closest comparison must be oldie *Rampage*). And indeed, knocking down buildings with a great range of vehicles is as much fun as it sounds. Initially the mass destruction is too easy, but the additional goals will soon have you tearing hair out from all over your body. Yes, even there. ★★ ★★

Body Harvest

■ **RPG/shooter** ■ 1 player
■ **Gremlin Interactive Bug-blasting, B-movie invasion; lots of aliens** Loads of weapons, 100 vehicles to drive around in and five varied levels single out this interesting blaster. The graphics are ropey, and the character dialogue terrible, but the mix of RPG and intense, panicky alien shooting works a treat and it's so big you'll get lost more often than you'd expect. ★★ ★★

Bomberman 64

■ **3D platformer** ■ 1-4 players ■ **Nintendo Infamous multi-playing antics** Hudson finally loses its knack of pumping out great *Bomberman* games. The pure fun that made the multi-player game a classic is in tatters and the one-player is like *Mario 64* with all its good bits – like the controls and variety – thrown in the bin. Steer well dear. ★★

Buck Bumble

■ **Shooter** ■ 1-2 players
■ **Ubisoft Honey-bee based shooting** Mission-based shooter with puzzle elements. There's a varied bunch of enemies, but the levels themselves aren't involving, and the boring looks and copious fogging effects make you feel that a limited amount of thought has been put into this offering. ★★

Bust-A-Move 3 DX

■ **Puzzle** ■ 1-4 players
■ **Acclaim Multi-coloured spherical fun** So very simple, and yet so utterly absorbing, this bubble-bursting sequel wipes the floor with most other puzzlers. There's a new four-player mode, and a ton of other options and challenges, although the story mode is a smidgeon too easy. It's not for everyone, but if you like popping coloured spheres and listening to the screams of crazy Japanese characters, you can't go wrong. ★★ ★★
Or try: **Bust-A-Move 2** ■ 1-2 players ■ Acclaim Entertainment ■ Addictive bubble-matching puzzler. ★★ ★★

Diddy Kong Racing

■ **Racing** ■ 1-4 players
■ **Nintendo/Rare Comedy animal karting** Very nearly laps *Mario Kart* with its more complex and inventive one-player game and superb graphics, but the multi-player option is duller than a dull thing on a very dull day. And those super-cute characters – ugh! Take them away, they're bringing us out in a rash. ★★ ★★

F1 World Grand Prix

■ **Racing** ■ 1-2 players
■ **Nintendo Fancy yourself as Damon Hill?** Looking as good as the real thing, with all the real cars, drivers, stats and loads of other nonsense. There're plenty of modes, too, whether your an arcade racer or true F1 fan, and the two-player mode rounds off the whole gorgeous package. "Let's see that again!" ★★ ★★

Fighters Destiny

■ **Fighter** ■ 1-2 players
■ **Ocean Laydeez and-ah gentlemen, we present the world's best N64 fighter...** Well-defined characters and plenty of moves make this, by default, the N64's *Tekken*. As with so many N64 games, it's too easy, but the excellent range of challenges ensures longevity. Brilliant speech, too. ★★ ★★

F-Zero X

■ **Racing** ■ 1-4 players
■ **Nintendo Quick-as-you-like space-age racer** The fastest, smoothest racer in the whole wide world, largely thanks to a loss of graphical detail. The controls are sublime, the handling fantastic and the tracks horrifically difficult. The over-steep learning curve and cheating computer opponents spoil the experience a bit. But don't worry too much about that. ★★ ★★



GoldenEye 007

■ **First-person shooter** ■ 1-4 players
■ **Nintendo/Rare The world's first spy sim** The game that causes little green lights to appear in the eyes of PC and PlayStation owners. A believable and immersive 3D world, with 20 challenging missions taking you from a snow-covered wasteland to the mens' toilets. Four difficulty levels from Agent to 007, and the best multi-player game money can buy if you ever get bored of 1-player. Plus it's got James Bond in it. And Robbie Coltrane. And Sean Bean... ★★ ★★

Gen 64:

Enter the Gecko
■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player ■ **GT Interactive Rubbish reptilian roam-about** Astonishingly simplistic platformer that proves far too linear. The camera hasn't a clue what it should be centring on, the graphics are laughable and the animation and level design have been devised by monkeys. Worst of all, it tries to be funny. Sigh. ★

ISS '98

■ **Sports** ■ 1-4 players
■ **Konami Beautiful goal-mouth adventures** Almost identical to the original *ISS 64*, and so you get the same silky controls and wealth of options, which mean beautifully smooth football. There are lots of subtle improvements – the referee is always on the pitch – and it's this, coupled with new camera angles, new kicks and better crosses and headers, that make it an essential purchase. Again. ★★ ★★

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

■ **RPG** ■ 1 player ■ **Nintendo The best game in the world ever** You can't write the word "Miyamoto" without following it up with "has created another masterpiece" – it's in the rules. Keeping all the traditional *Zelda* hallmarks and wrapping them up in a beautifully realised 3D world, this platformy RPG is worth buying an N64 for. The wandering about, talking, fighting and cut-scenes have been tweaked and fine-tuned until they're perfect. An absolute marvel. ★★ ★★

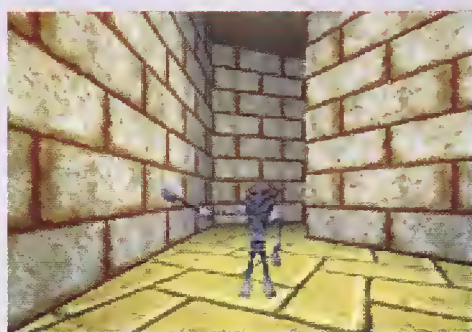
Lylat Wars

■ **Shooter** ■ 1-4 players
■ **Nintendo Animal Magic in space** Loosely based on the SNES's *Starwing*, and intended to

STAB IN THE BACK

Monty Con

Utopia's *Montezuma's Return* for PC really is a pile of crap.



■ **Updates of old classics** are nothing new. *R-Type*, *Bubble Bobble*, *Asteroids* and a host of others have successfully been given a makeover, mainly because the original games met the two golden retro requirements: One, they were truly memorable. Two, they were good. Sadly, Utopia picked a game that's neither.

The original Atari VCS *Montezuma's Revenge* hardly lit up the gaming world, and yet it's been unwisely bundled with this new version, as though the

developer is boasting, "See how Utopia has updated this classic!" Sadly, the only boast the company should be making is, "See how this tedious 15-year-old original is vastly more entertaining than Utopia's dull triple!"

Rather than retain *Max Montezuma's* 2D charms, Utopia has chosen to show his world in first-person 3D, bringing home the bland caves and dungeons in yet more detail. The odd flame or ladder livens things up from time to time, but otherwise the faux-Aztec environment struggles to

produce anything more exciting than a particularly vibrant shade of brown.

You needn't fret about the graphics, though, as you'll spend most of the game flat against a wall or staring at the floor. Max is subject to an inertia usually reserved for the *Mir Space Station*, and slips and slides about like an intoxicated penguin. Any attempts to smack up the wandering Aztec warriors usually results in an embarrassing sprint right past them and off the nearest cliff-edge.

To complete this sad story, Utopia has offered the kind of puzzles that went out of fashion with the *Rubik's Cube*. With the only obstruction being the odd bat or weedy boss, play quickly becomes a trek to find the next key or switch, which opens up a door to the next identical-looking dungeon.

After *Monty's Revenge* and *Return*, here's to the next instalment being *Montezuma's Retirement*.

be a truly immersive movie-like experience, with cut-scenes that ape films like *Independence Day*. It's too easy, and it would have been nice to have a level select, but it's still addictive, well-crafted and frantic. ★★★★★

Madden 64

■ **Sports** ■ 1-4 players ■ **EA Sports American football series update** Looks a little sparse, especially without the official logos that *Quarterback Club* offers, but the controls and game mechanics are so intuitive that for the first time you'll feel like you actually understand what's going on. Hut! Hut! Hut! Or something. ★★★★★

Mario Kart 64

■ **Racer** ■ 1-4 players ■ **Nintendo O! Mario takes to the racetrack** The original comedy racer returns. The one-player game is a lonely experience, especially when you're up against the cheating computer karts, but the time-trial mode adds longevity and the great multi-player game is arguably the best that's available on any platform. ★★★★★

Mission: Impossible

■ **Spy sim** ■ 1 player ■ **Infogrames Tom Cruise in 3D roam-about** Not bad looking, with great ideas (such as disguising yourself as other characters in order to progress through the story) that should've turned this 3D stealth-'em-up in to a potential *GoldenEye*-beater. Sadly, however, it's turned out a little bland. ★★

Mortal Kombat 4

■ **Fighting** ■ 1-2 players ■ **GT Interactive Mad, bad blood-filled fist fight** The *Mortal Kombat* series has become synonymous with fighting that's simplistic but faster than its rivals, and number four is no exception. It's a whole load of fun, and the 3D looks good, while keeping up an amusingly frantic pace. It's a bit too easy to pull off complicated moves and there's no innovation, but this is still a laugh-a-minute fighter. ★★★★★

Or try: MK Mythologies

■ 1 player ■ GT Interactive ■ Beat-'em-up/RPG marriage. ★



Mystical Ninja

■ **RPG** ■ 1 player ■ **Konami Surreal adventure with a blue-haired maniac** More of an RPG-platform game than anything — the fundamental unfolding of the story is coupled with a range of *Mario*-style platforming tasks, and is all the better for it. *Ninja* is mammoth, and the only real downer here is that once you've completed it, you're not likely to return to it. ★★★★★

NBA Jam '99

■ **Sports** ■ 1-4 players ■ **Acclaim Option-heavy basketball sim** Smacking a ball into a net isn't quite as much fun as in Nintendo's *Courtside*, but it looks good, plays fast and contains enough options to enable you to shape the game to your exact requirements. It's dead tricky — defending, in particular, is a nightmare — but a sports game that's realistically difficult is a refreshing change. ★★★★★

Or try: Kobe Bryant in NBA Courtside

■ 1-4 players ■ Nintendo ■ Great basketball ★★★★★



Quake 64

■ **First-person shooter** ■ 1-2 players ■ **GT Interactive PC owners have less to laugh about** Nothing wrong with this version, but with no more than two players able to take part at any one time, the multi-playering that made the original such great fun is now taking rather a back seat to the monotonous one-player game. And 2D enemies? Please, put us out of our misery now. ★★★★★

Rakuga Kids

■ **Fighting** ■ 1-2 players ■ **Konami Pastel-based punch-'em-up** As a host of 2D graffiti monsters lay into one another, you'd be forgiven for thinking that Konami has lost the plot. But the fighting that you'll discover hiding underneath these crayoned crazies is surprisingly solid, even if it's often rather difficult to work out whether you've made contact. There's lots to do, and it's brilliantly cute and cuddly. ★★★★★

S.C.A.R.S.

■ **Driving** ■ 1-4 players ■ **Ubisoft Rough-terrain racing** Ubisoft's attempt to bring us a *Mario Kart* without the cutesy characters is partly successful. The handling of the vehicles doesn't feel right, but the developer has ably minimised the fogging, and there are the usual assortment of tracks and weapons to keep you occupied. Even the multi-player is above average, so cautious pats on the back all round. ★★★★★

Snowboard Kids

■ **Racing** ■ 1-4 players ■ **Nintendo Mario Kart for the snowboard generation** This looks, sounds and plays very simply, but its packed full o' fun and liable to make you a load of new friends if you show them the multi-player game. The one-player game is challenging, if only for the games you get to play against the computer boarders, who have some kind of 2001-style hatred of humans. ★★★★★

South Park

■ **Shooter** ■ 1-4 players ■ **Acclaim Oh My God! It's rubbish!** This TV-based first-person shooter is a particularly cynical cash-in at the expense of fans of the show. There's no variety in the characters you meet, the levels are tediously similar and nothing really happens. The speech and graphics are top notch, and the scenery isn't bad, but at heart this is the N64's least interesting shoot-'em-up. ★★

Spacestation: Silicon Valley

■ **Puzzle** ■ 1 player ■ **Take 2 Interactive Animal-control puzzler (with nasty side)** Kill animals and take control of them to solve tricky puzzles. Graphics do their job well, the controls and puzzles are great, and the attention to detail is second to none. Inevitably, though, since it's a 3D game, you should expect some trouble from the camera. ★★★★★

Starshot: Space Circus Fever

■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player ■ **Infogrames Weird French 3D platformer** As usual with 3D games, the unwieldy camera and over-fiddly controls are present and correct. Aside from that, the levels are large and the graphics

almost too intricate, but there's too much wandering between one place and the next, and the necessary between-platform jumping isn't helped by those damn controls. ★★★★★



Super Mario 64

■ **3D platformer** ■ 1 player ■ **Nintendo If you only buy one game this century...** The gold standard by which all videogames are judged. It was the first true 3D platformer for a brand new console, with the reputation of the world's number one game character at stake, and it's a total masterpiece. Huge levels, sublime controls and totally immersive gameplay. ★★★★★

Turok 2

■ **Shooter** ■ 1-4 players ■ **Acclaim Entertainment Make dinosaurs extinct (just one more time)** Even without the addition of the 4Mb RAM Pak, this looks stunning, and the game itself is helped by impossibly large guns and no more of the precision jumping nonsense that marred its prequel. The tasks will appear slightly familiar if you're already a fan of *Doom*, and the difficulty is sometimes off the scale, but otherwise this is fan-blood-dy-tastic. ★★★★★

Or try: *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* ■ 1 player ■ Acclaim Entertainment ■ Make dinosaurs extinct once more. ★★★★★



V-Rally 99

■ **Driving** ■ 1-2 players ■ **Infogrames Roads, revs and racers** With your car skidding about and flipping into the trees if you don't use the brake, *V-Rally* is a tricky game, which makes it difficult to learn but pleasing to master. There's a wealth of challenges if you're willing to persevere, and the graphics and velocity are adequate, if not outstanding. Still, it's a decent N64 racer, so not to be sniffed at. ★★★★★

Or try: Top Gear Rally

■ 1-2 players ■ Nintendo ■ The best real-car racer on the N64. ★★★★★

Wayne Gretzky 3D Hockey '98

■ **Sports** ■ 1-4 players ■ **GT Interactive Updated version of original ice hockey sim** Fast and smooth enough to make for an accurate interpretation of the too-quick-to-watch sport, but you need to persevere if you want to feel like you're actually taking control, and there's a distinct lack of challenge from the N64 opponents. ★★★★★

WCW vs NWO Revenge

■ **Sports** ■ 1-4 players ■ **THO Greasy blokes at it again** A largely unimproved update of *WCW/NOW World Tour*, its main claim to fame being a slew of up-to-date grapplers. The graphics have been slightly improved, and it moves a lot quicker than its predecessor, but it's too easy to get to the end, despite the individual matches being far too

long. Satisfying for a while, but ultimately very samey. ★★★★★



Wetriz

■ **Puzzler** ■ 1-2 players ■ **Ocean Build lakes and fry 'em with fireballs** Much more of a successor to *Tetris* than it is to *Tetrisphere*. Initially as difficult as hell, but stick with it and the clear — if rather limited — tactics become obvious. A *Tetris*-like addiction will then take control of your life, and make your pets leave home. ★★★★★

WipEout 64

■ **Driving** ■ 1-4 players ■ **Midway Funky futuristic face-flapper** This conversion of the PlayStation's seminal racer seems perfectly suited to the Nintendo's analogue controller, helping to lessen the steep learning curve it offers. Plenty of weapons and sumptuous graphics are on offer, but the vehicles still feel floaty and temperamental, and there're better space-age racing games available for the N64. ★★★★★

World Cup '98

■ **Sports** ■ 1-4 players ■ **EA Sports A football game with a big cock on the box** The FIFA license and dear old Des Lynam make this the public's choice, but the sluggish controls and disappointing visuals mean you'll be left with a sense of bitter disappointment — not unlike that experienced by avid England supporters after this year's World Cup. And the one in 1990. ★★★★★

WWF Warzone

■ **Sports** ■ 1-4 players ■ **Acclaim Entertainment Leotard-tastic** Looks good, but boring in one-player — there are only so many times that kicking someone in the smalls is amusing (once). But get your wrestling-loving mates to join in (if you can find any), and you can enjoy four-men-on-the-floor action. A novel create-a-player section rounds it off. ★★★★★

YG2: Extreme G 2

■ **Driving** ■ 1-4 players ■ **Acclaim Space-age motorbike sequel** Iguana hasn't done much to improve on the faults of the original — you never feel completely in control, and the frame rate still dips dangerously low. It's a visual and aural treat, but as you crash into the 15th barrier in a row and flip to face the oncoming traffic, you'll start to feel cheated. Persevere, and there are rewards — just not enough. ★★★★★



Cool Hand (Color)

■ **Card games** ■ 1 player ■ **Take 2 Interactive It's a load of card games, innit?** Blackjack, solitaire and cribbage in one package, and the option to play to any country's rules. The graphics are nice enough, and the games are extensive, but isn't a pack of cards far cheaper? ★★★★★

Donkey Kong Land II: Diddy Kong's Quest

■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player ■ **Nintendo Mini monkey stories** Tries hard to squeeze the SNES version into the tiny grey handheld and doesn't do too

badly. The visuals are difficult to make out occasionally, thanks to their complexity, but the controls and wealth of secrets make it a worthy *Mario*-style jump-about. ★★★★★

Game & Watch Gallery

■ **Compilation** ■ 1 player ■ **Nintendo Four titles in one** Featuring *Fire, Manhole, Octopus* and *Oil Panic*, these games offer simple fun, having been transcribed faithfully from the original handheld wonders. There's a museum section, too, but — let's be honest here — weren't Game & Watches always a bit rubbish? ★★★★★



James Bond 007

■ **RPG** ■ Nintendo ■ 1 player ■ **Shaken or stirred?** Nothing remarkably innovative about this top-down Game Boy RPG, but it's nice to see one set in the modern world, even if it is a tad simple. The sparse mazes that form the levels are rather short and somewhat disappointing, but the tough end-of-level bosses and emphasis on sneaking about means this gets 004 stars. ★★★★★

Legend of Zelda IV: Link's Awakening

■ **RPG** ■ Nintendo ■ 1 player ■ **The endearing elf in B&W** A truly involving plot, coupled with beautiful graphics (including plenty of cut-scenes) and a story where the emphasis is on engaging the player in the same way as *FFVII*. It's incredibly difficult, with a vast range of interesting challenges — can *Zelda* do no wrong? ★★★★★

Montezuma's Return (Color)

■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player ■ **Take 2 Unknown quantity, Max, returns** A little character jumping about, climbing ladders and collecting keys, just like the old days. The graphics are lovely, and it controls well enough over the numerous levels, but the '80s design and fall-too-far-and-die feature will have you chucking your Boy through a window. ★★★★★

Mortal Kombat 4

■ **Fighting** ■ 1 player ■ **Midway Disappointing fight-'em-up** Whereas the next generation machines have been enjoying the latest 3D versions of this long-running bloody beat-'em-up series, sadly the Game Boy's been landed with the old-style, jerky feel that belongs to the very first instalment. And no blood? What's the point? ★

Or try: Street Fighter II

■ Nintendo ■ 1 player ■ Classic small-scale beat-'em-up. ★★★★★

NFL Blitz

■ **1 player** ■ **Midway Arcade-style US football** With only seven players per side and no penalties permitted, this is a fast 'n' furious interpretation of nobody's favourite sport. The game you'll find underneath isn't too bad, and there's a surprising depth to the tactics and play-calling, but — incredibly — the players suffer from the early-'80s problem of "flicker", which makes tracking them impossible. ★★★★★

Power Quest (Color)

■ **Fighter** ■ 2 players ■ **Sunsoft Odd RPG/fight mixture** Lots of talking and

shops, just like in an RPG, but at heart it's a pure beat-'em-up. The ability to upgrade yer robot fighter is a welcome addition and the fighting has a bit more depth than some of the usual Game Boy examples. It's a bit different, but generally only okay. ★★★★★

Rampage World Tour

■ **Arcade action** ■ 1-2 players ■ **Midway The classic smash-'em-up updated** Every small boy's dream come true — control King Kong, Wolfman or Godzilla and smash up buildings. Unfortunately, that's it, and it isn't helped by the jerky animation and frankly boring graphics. Sadly, boys, it turns out that knocking skyscrapers down all day isn't as much fun as it sounds. ★

Super Mario Land

■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player ■ **Nintendo The pipe man cometh** One of the Game Boy's original release games, and *Super Mario* still excels in most areas, despite its advanced nine years. The graphics are simple, but the subtlety of control and excellent level designs have been carried over to the bijou Nintendo with aplomb. ★★★★★

Or try: Super Mario Land II

■ 1 player ■ Nintendo ■ More, but with little originality. ★★★★★

Tennis

■ **Sports** ■ 1-2 players ■ **Nintendo Racquet fun** Despite its simplicity, *Tennis* is one of the most enjoyable such sims on any platform. With an additive two-player option, a hard-to-beat computer player and some very intuitive controls, this is a great game if you want to avoid real-life John McEnroe-style ill-placed-abuse nonsense. ★★★★★

Tetris DX

■ **Puzzler** ■ 1-2 players ■ **Nintendo GB Color Brick drop return shock!** The graphics, sounds and modes might have changed a little, but this is still the same old Game Boy *Tetris*, renowned worldwide as the most addictive version of the Russian puzzler. Stemming the rising wall of bricks is, in fact, all the better for being able to save your high scores at long last, but sadly the game doesn't work too well in black and white. ★★★★★

Turok

■ **Platformer** ■ 1 player ■ **Acclaim Entertainment Dinky dinosaur hunt** Absolutely massive, and the high difficulty should prevent you from seeing the end sequence for quite a while, if ever. However, the quite shocking lack of game originality — nabbing bits from platformers left, right and centre, and dressing them up in fancy graphics — counts against it, as does its lack of fresh challenges per level. ★★★★★

Wave Race

■ **Racing** ■ 1-4 players ■ **Nintendo Original jet ski sim** This doesn't quite reach the standards of the N64 version, with small, top-down 2D graphics. It's near-impossible to beat the CPU opponents, but the controls are as intuitive as the N64 incarnation and there are plenty of tracks to race on. You can't argue with a four-player mode, either. ★★★★★

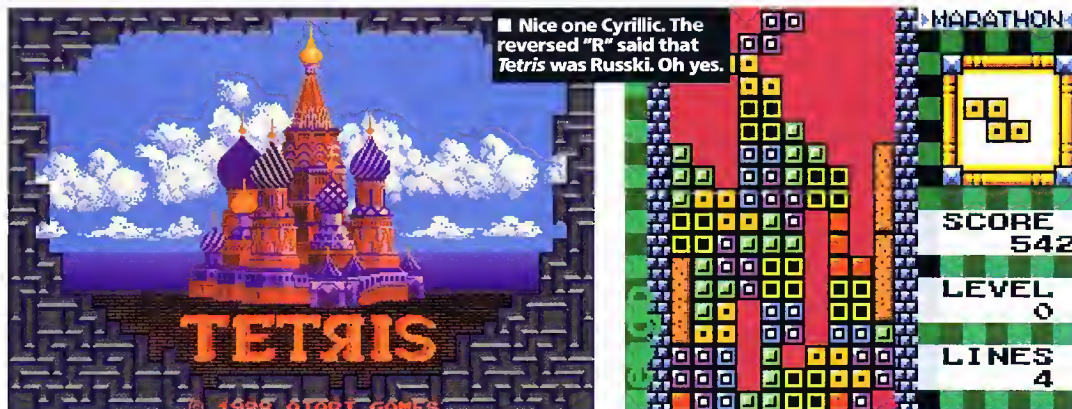
WWF Warzone

■ **Sports** ■ 1-player ■ **Acclaim Entertainment Men in PANTS action** Although the graphics make this a bit of a looker, the animation is jerky and odd, and the game suffers from finger-snapping controls, which are too slow to be effective. Amuse yourself by considering the plight of all these poor greased men, though. ★★★★★

Compiled by | **Mark Green**

February 1988

Soviet blocks, BT in court and Star "Paws": It all happened 11 years ago today.



■ Nice one Cyrillic. The reversed "R" said that Tetris was Russki. Oh yes.

Soviet strike: Tetris arrives

Everyone's suffered from it. Even "normal" people who generally steer clear of games, have placed their weary heads on a soft, welcoming pillow, closed their eyes, and watched as the space between eyelid and eyeball is filled with a sea of multi-coloured falling blocks. It's the first and most recognisable symptom of massive Tetris addiction, and it has been afflicting gamers of all creeds since the game's release 11 years ago.

C64 Version

Great music and bright graphics make this very attractive stuff, though it's the kind of brilliantly simple idea that'll work well on almost any machine.

GRAPHICS 7 IQ FACTOR 10
AUDIO 9 FUN FACTOR 8
ACE RATING 956

■ Tetris' near-perfect score from ACE.

The idea behind Tetris was so simple that rival developers were immediately hauled into their bosses' offices to explain why they hadn't thought of it first. After all, the game merely required that you manoeuvre and rotate a range of falling blocky shapes to create solid horizontal lines that would then disappear and prevent the ever-rising wall from

engulfing the screen. There were few rewards for success – only a higher score – as the game gradually and painfully increased its speed until your reflexes packed up.

Alexey Pajitnov, the Russian responsible for the idea behind the game and programmer of the original incarnation, used his brainy scientific nature to ensure that gamers were effectively hypnotised by Tetris. The theory was that the human brain could only hold seven items in short-term memory at one time. Alexey programmed his game using seven tetrads (shapes that are made by sticking four squares together). His theory – that this would make the game more reflexive and addictive –

was proved right, as pirated copies of PC Tetris spread across the USSR. Workers stared for hours at the coloured falling bricks, causing productivity levels to fall and divorce levels to increase.

When Mirrorsoft brought Tetris to the UK in 1988, the game was already three years old and – astonishingly – completely illegal. The game had been sold to Mirrorsoft by Robert Stein of the publisher Andromeda. Stein had been pursuing the rights from Pajitnov but hadn't yet finalised permission. When the sinister-sounding Electronorgtechnica (Russia's ministry of computer trade) took control of Tetris's distribution, and told Stein that any deals were off, he spent several months frantically trying to get the rights to a game that he'd already sold to Robert Maxwell.

Fortunately, in May 1988 Stein succeeded, but by then Tetris was already the best-known and most widely-played puzzler since Rubik's Cube.

Accolades came thick and fast, with ACE magazine in particular giving Tetris 956 out of 1,000 and describing it as "a horribly gripping game you won't be able to get out of your head." A host of awards were flung in its direction, including four "Excellence In Software" gongs from the Software Publishers Association (SPA).

The crazy world of the Web reveals some bizarre attempts to get to the bottom of its appeal. Try Brian Kobashikawa's exhaustive site: (<http://synergy.design.ucla.edu/gallery/kobashik/tetris/>), which offers, among other things, an analysis of the sexual pleasures gained from a good game of Tetris. He also believes that the game "achieved its world-wide popularity due to it not being particularly bound to any culture or society – it transcends all barriers."

Also unearthed from deep within the bowels of the Internet is a formal research project on why Tetris games with just two types of tetrad are impossible to beat. Inevitably there's also a "Tao of Tetris" site. But the biggest indicators of the game's success are the thousands of unofficial sequels and clones; the 50 million copies sold and the estimated \$1-billion made from the idea. That and the populations of entire cities enduring another sleepless night, thanks to those endlessly falling blocks.



■ Tetris: a Russian game sold illegally via Hungary to Robert Maxwell.

Games of the month | The games that were causing smiles when Sonic was just a twinkle in his daddy's eye...



Bubble Bobble

Publisher: Firebird
System: Atari ST
■ This 16-bit translation of the brilliant bubble-busting arcade platformer was by far the best. Bub and Bob (the same little dinos still fulfilling their bubbly destiny in the Bust-A-Move games) were as cute as a button, and the gameplay was as finely tuned as you'd expect from platform-master Taito.



Cosmic Causeway

Publisher: Gremlin
System: C64
■ Control a big bouncing ball travelling across monotonous, checkered landscapes, avoiding blocky caterpillars and dragons? It might not sound enthralling, but this sequel to the pseudo-3D sphere-roller Trailblazer was fast and responsive; a game that made you forego lunch and dinner to keep playing.



Firefly

Publisher: Special FX
System: Spectrum
■ In retrospect, this shoot-'em-up – from the maker of the excellent Jim-Almond Cobra – only had pretty visuals in its favour. The insect-inspired spacecraft was a pig to control. And travelling through sectors, shooting baddies and solving simplistic puzzles was quickly repetitive. Still, nice explosions.



Hard Graftgold

When videogames really took off in the early '80s, the global mega-corporations were quick to get involved. British Telecom was no exception, quickly setting up Telecomsoft and its subsidiary software labels Firebird and Rainbird to absorb any spare money that people might have left after paying the phone bill. With the massive wallet of Telecom behind it, these labels were able to purchase and publish such classic titles as *Elite*, *The Sentinel* and *Starglider*.

Unfortunately, a big wallet is often synonymous with a big ego and a big attitude, and Telecomsoft was almost too eager to enter into a series of legal scrapes. Naturally, it often emerged from these spats grinning from ear to ear, thanks largely to having a more acute business sense than software houses consisting largely of lads who'd grown up hunched over computer keyboards in their bedrooms. One such dispute came to a head 11 years ago this month, and was partly responsible for bringing to an end the life of veteran publisher, Hewson Consultants.


Hewson had developed a reputation for high-quality games since the primitive but perversely enjoyable *Heathrow Air Traffic Controller* was released for the ZX81 in 1981. Hewson coders such as Andrew Braybrook, Raffaele Cecco and Dominic Robinson spent their days programming games

that still bring a tear to the eye. Classics such as zippy scrolling shooter *Uridium* and the frog-based maze game *Ranarama* helped cement Hewson's popularity among 8-bit gamers.

At the time, 16-bit computers were vying for the attention of 8-bit programmers everywhere. A number of Hewson's most prolific writers branched out and formed development house Graftgold. They set to work on a host of 8-bit and 16-bit titles, including: *Morpheus* (by Braybrook for the Commodore 64) and *Magnetron* (by Steve Turner for the Spectrum).

Hewson believed it had first dibs on these two games, but Graftgold signed on for Telecomsoft. Hewson, whose reputation had suffered when the programmers left, was miffed, and summoned its solicitors. The court found in favour of BT and ordered Hewson to pay costs. Hewson watched bitterly from the sidelines as Graftgold entered a long-term contact with the Telecom boys.

Hewson later reformed as 21st Century Entertainment and concentrated on pinball videogames, before winding up its UK operations earlier in 1998. Telecomsoft didn't last much longer either, and was bought by MicroProse a year after the court case. This caused a slew of Graftgold-based legal problems in itself – as anyone who waited a year for the team's *Rainbow Islands* conversion will tell you.

What of Graftgold? It produced games such as *Fire & Ice* for the PC and 16-bit computers but then past into mysterious "retirement". According to some ex-Hewson programmers it's still out there somewhere. According to other sources, the members are have all gone into "sad database coding". But their history lives on... 

Gaming Round-up | Also going on this month

■ Software publisher Destiny announced an ingenious competition to tie in with its snow-based shoot-'em-up, *Yeti*. After placing a bet of £200 (at 150-1) on Chris Bonnington finding the abominable snowman, the company promised to give the winnings to anyone who accurately described the monster if found. If no-one got the description right? Destiny kept the money, of course. Sneaky...

■ It was a great month for competitions. Hewson had already pulled off the least sensible move in gaming by publishing an abysmal train-driving simulation, *Evening Star*. The company's next step was to run a competition – in conjunction with *Railway World* magazine, no less – for anyone who thought they were the world champion Bristol-to-Bournemouth route-negotiator. You see now why Hewson went bust?

■ Capcom, best-known today for its original and diverse range of identical *Street Fighter* games, severed its relationship with publishing house Elite and snuggled up



■ The "Boy Line-acre" (as Mick Channon famously called him) proves that retro is in – even if you've forgotten Mr Channon.

with US Gold instead. The excellent platformer *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* was just one of many fine games subsequently published via US Gold, until Capcom realised that *Street Fighter* alone would see the company right for the next ten years.

■ Despite extensive advertising, Matthew "Jet Set Willy" Smith's new game (breath in) *Attack of the Mutant Zombie Flesh Eating Chickens From Mars Starring Zippo The Dog*, was cancelled by Software Projects. The Crazy Internet Rumours Factory has it that the budget Spectrum/C64 game

Star Paws was uncereemoniously dumped as Nintendo's distributor in the UK, after a particularly poor performance. The Nintendo Entertainment System had died a Sega Saturn-style death in the UK, and no new games have been released since the machine's debut. This left the Sega Master System to steal all the glory. So, you can blame Mattel for that irritating Sonic creature – at least as far as UK sales go.

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World News Headlines

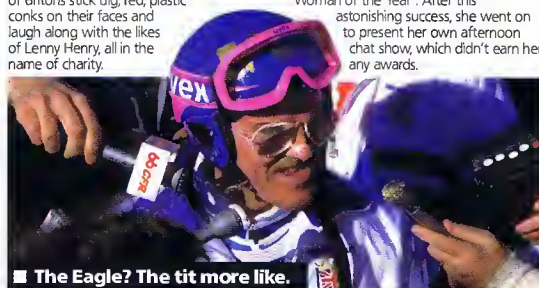
Away from the digital world

■ Britain became the laughing stock of the world as it worshipped Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards, a bespectacled young chap with the ski-jumping skills of a cardboard box.

■ The first Comic Relief Day saw millions of Britons stick big, red, plastic conks on their faces and laugh along with the likes of Lenny Henry, all in the name of charity.

■ MPs voted to let TV cameras into the House of Commons, meaning that fans of lovely housewife Mrs Margaret Hilda Thatcher finally got to see what she looked like close up. It wasn't nice at all.

■ Esther Rantzen emerged victorious as "Woman of the Year". After this astonishing success, she went on to present her own afternoon chat show, which didn't earn her any awards.



Music Charts

13th February 1988

- 1 I Think We're Alone Now *Tiffany*
- 2 I Should Be So Lucky *Kylie Minogue*
- 3 When Will I Be Famous *Bros*
- 4 Tell It To My Heart *Taylor Dayne*
- 5 Candle In The Wind (Live) *Elton John*

■ Information from CIN

Film Charts

London, 12th February 1988

- 1 Robocop
- 2 Fatal Attraction
- 3 No Way Out
- 4 White Mischief
- 5 Cry Freedom

■ Information from Screen International

Zzap 64 Readers' Chart

- 1 The Last Ninja *System 3*
- 2 Bubble Bobble *Firebird*
- 3 California Games *US Gold/Epyx*
- 4 Wizball *Ocean*
- 5 Barbarian *Palace*
- 6 World Class Leaderboard *US Gold/Access*
- 7 Leaderboard *US Gold/Access*
- 8 World Games *US Gold/Epyx*
- 9 Kikstart II *Mastertronic*
- 10 Zynaps *Hewson*

Your Sinclair magazine Spectrum top 10

- 1 OutRun *US Gold*
- 2 Match Day II *Ocean*
- 3 Combat School *Ocean*
- 4 Gunship *MicroProse*
- 5 Garfield – Big Fat Hairy Deal *The Edge*
- 6 California Games *Epyx*
- 7 Gary Lineker's Superstar Soccer *Gremlin*
- 8 Star Wars *Domark*
- 9 Magnificent 7 *Ocean*
- 10 Football Director *D&H*

■ PHOTOGRAPHY: ALLSPORT PA NEWS



Matchday II

Publisher: *Image/Ocean*
System: *Spectrum*

■ As mentioned in *Arcade* 2's "Where Are They Now?", Jon Ritman and Bernie Drummond came up trumps with this sequel to the early '80s original. Improved graphics and more intelligent computer foes meant that, until *Sensei Soccer* on the Amiga, this was "The Best Footy Game Ever".



Powerplay

Publisher: *Arcana*
System: *Amiga/ST*

■ This *Trivial Pursuit*-comer strategy game let you answer questions and beat up your opponent's team members, adding those extra slices of enjoyment and value that a computer board game needs. It looked nice too, tempting 8-bit owners buy one of those new-fangled 16-bit things.



Test Drive

Publisher: *Accolade*
System: *Amiga/ST*

■ The *Test Drive* series began with this radically ground-breaking 3D racer. Realism was heightened by the addition of patrol cars that gave you speeding tickets unless you used your speedtrap-detecting radar, or ran them ragged. The range of cars that all handled differently, was a first, too.

Great Gaming Moments

Hide and sneak

Remembered by | **Rich Pelley**

Experience getting away from it all in Konami's **Metal Gear Solid**.



Sometimes you visit a place – maybe a city or a natural wonder – that takes your breath away. That will be imprinted on your mind forever. That you'll never want to visit again Just In Case It Isn't So Good Next Time. Or you'll eat a meal that sends your taste buds into a frenzy, that makes you wonder "What have I been eating all this time when I could have been eating *this*?" Or maybe you'll meet a person of the opposite sex that you'll instantly connect with; that you'll feel like you've known forever, whom you want to marry and be happy with For The Rest Of Your Life.

Similarly, sometimes – just sometimes – you'll reach a location in a videogame, pick up a power-up or interact with a character

and find yourself having to stop, take a mental step back and think "This is great, this is. What a fantastic idea. What an absolute stroke of bloody *genius*."

And so when you first discover that you can climb into the cardboard box in *Metal Gear Solid*, you won't you won't want to get out of it for hours. It's hilarious. You'll be accustomed to the sneaky nature of the game already: hiding in the shadows, clinging to walls, avoiding the track of security cameras and fitting a silencer to your gun to sneakily pick off the baddies from behind without alerting attention to yourself. But then you find the box and climb on in. You can move about! It's like a stupid Warner Brothers' *Road Runner* cartoon, where Wile E. Coyote hides inside a box on roller skates with a magnet, trying to skulk up on an unsuspecting Road Runner who he's lured to a standstill with a plate full of birdseed laced with Acme iron pellets. If it can work for Wile (and, let's face it, maybe this time might just be the time it does), then surely it can work for you too?

And the box is also an invaluable tool. You can use it to sneak past enemies, provided you're not being entirely stupid, that is. A cardboard box that has come to life and is

Wanna play?

■ Konami's *Metal Gear Solid* is set for a UK release on 26 February. The Japanese version has been out on import for a couple of months, but it's so text-heavy that if you buy it, you'll miss out on the superb storyline and also find the game far too hard to play. There's a US version out too, but Konami has tried to slap a ban on US imports of this entering the UK, so copies can be thin on the ground. Still, it's not long to wait until the end of February.

moseying along a walkway is still going to draw attention to itself, after all. But once you're in the box, you can hide it in the back of cargo trucks and get yourself a free lift to the destination on the side of the carton. (Wondered why the boxes were labelled? It's so that you can use them to save time backtracking through the levels.)

You can also cover under the cardboard to avoid the attack of the wolf dogs. Taking the opportunity to mark his territory, the wolf puppy will relieve himself over your board-protected head and (because you now smell of dogs) you will avoid any more hound hassle. When you've finished, you can get out of the box and, *Inspector Gadget*-style, stuff it into your pocket to carry around for as long as you want, pulling it out whenever the need calls. But just hiding in it is *still* fantastic. It's as good as the real thing. Provided, of course, your "thing" is hiding in cardboard boxes.



Once you discover you can climb in the box, you won't want to get out. It's hilarious.

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**MMPPFF MUPE MUMMFF
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MUMFUMFMUH MUMMPF**

(WHAT KENNY IS TRYING TO SAY IS THAT SOUTH PARK THE GAME IS COMING SOON)



WARNING
This game is
recommended for mature
audiences only. It contains
adult language and content.

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